

# Mark Devotionals & Sermon Illustrations-2

## Devotionals & Sermon Illustrations Our Daily Bread

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### Related Resources:

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## Mark 1

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- If you enjoy [Vance Havner](#), there are a number of his pithy quotes on Mark in this compilation.

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**Mark 1:13** He was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him.

In what different circumstances is the last Adam to the first! He began in a garden which the Lord God had planted; but his great Antitype in a wilderness, the thorns of which spoke of that primal sin. But whereas the first Adam transformed the garden into a wilderness, the last will convert all desert places into gardens — whether they be in the heart, or the world around — so that they shall blossom as the rose.

To Adam the beasts came, that he might name them; but at the coming of the last Adam they were wild. “He was with the wild beasts.” Yet they were tame to his pure manhood. “He had dominion over the works of God’s hands.” On his brow the crown of royalty over the inferior races, which man had lost, was already placed. Is it not also true that holy men still have power over the lower creation? Certainly Francis of Assisi had. And in the ages, yet future, the children shall play, unhurt, amid the wild beasts of the forest.

Again it is true of thee, O son of man, that, like thy Lord, thou art between the wild beasts and the angels. On the one side thou teachest the lower, and on the other the higher. At every moment thou art called to choose between these twain. Thy body calls thee this way, and thy spirit that. Be sure to deny the lower appetites; rule them; be king and lord in the realm of thy soul. Make them crouch around thee, as the lions of Daniel’s den. Get thy Lord to master them for thee. Else thou wilt miss the angels of God, who come to encamp around thee, and minister to thee, as one of the heirs of salvation. Was it here that Christ learnt to contrast his homelessness with the lairs of the beasts! Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 1:12-13 Attended By Angels!** - Why am I tempted so much? Sometimes it just gets to be a real burden just coping with the day-to-day temptations that never seem to go away. "If God really loves me, why am I tempted so much?"

A number of years ago the Douglas Aircraft company was competing with Boeing to sell Eastern Airlines its first big jets. War hero Eddie Rickenbacker, the head of Eastern Airlines, reportedly told Donald Douglas that the specifications and claims made by Douglas's company for the DC-8 were close to Boeing's on everything except noise suppression. Rickenbacker then gave Douglas one last chance to out-promise Boeing on this feature. After consulting with his engineers, Douglas reported that he didn't feel he could make that promise. Rickenbacker replied, "I know you can't, I just wanted to see if you were still honest." (Today in the Word, MBI, October, 1991, p. 22.) Christian character is not a result of leading a life free of temptation. Temptation is a part of every Christian's life. Just ask Christ. When He was in the desert for 40 days He was not free of temptation. The Bible tells us that He was "tempted by Satan" and "attended by angels." The test of Christian character is not that you are tempted but that you stand up under temptation. Christians of good character are tempted and will always be tempted. True character depends upon resisting the devil's advances, not being free of them. Character is a product of reacting to sin, not facing it. When we react to sin by fleeing from it, as was Christ, we will be attended by angels and be given the strength to stay the course.

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**Mark 1:15 Just One Soul!** - One Sunday evening years ago, I left my home to go to our evening services at the Church where I was then Pastor. Only myself, and my little eight year old son was there. No one showed up that Sunday evening, as the weather was quite stormy. We waited until about 7:20 and told my boy that we might as well go home, that the storm must have kept anyone from coming to the service. He looked up at me and said, "Daddy I am here." I preached the message that night that the Lord gave to me for the service, and at the sermons end I did as I always have, I gave an invitation for any to come to Christ. That night my son, the only one present with me, gave his heart and life to the Saviour. What if I had missed that service. What if I had gone home that stormy night? My son might still be lost. But God showed us His Power and Grace that night as 100% of my congregation came to Him for salvation. - Gary Huckaby

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#### **Mark 1:15 The First Word Of Salvation**

Repent, and believe in the gospel. —Mark 1:15

Evangelist J. Edwin Orr said that "the first word of the gospel" is repentance. It's a turning away from sin and toward the Lord. The prophet Zechariah cried out to the people of Israel to repent and return to the Lord: "Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds" (Zech. 1:4).

Salvation begins with repentance. It involves a change of mind about sin, which leads to belief in Jesus Christ and brings us the forgiveness of God. Yet repentance is more than a once-for-all act that initiates salvation. It is an ongoing choice—a change of mind that sees sin as wrong, confesses it, and rejects it.

Martin Luther put it this way in the first of the 95 theses he nailed to the door of the Wittenberg church: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said 'repent,' He willed that the entire life of a believer be one of repentance." It's an ongoing mindset toward sin.

Here's the point. The change of mind that is the heart of repentance should become a pattern of thinking—a lifestyle. Even though we are secure in Christ, we must continue to see sin through God's eyes and acknowledge it as evil. And when we sin, let's repent, confess our wrongdoing, and receive the forgiveness of God. By [David Egner](#)

I reached for His tender compassion  
Because I was sinful and weak,  
And oh, the sweet words of forgiveness  
I heard Him so willingly speak! —Simon

Repentance means hating sin enough to turn from it.

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**Mark 1:14-15 - A Prophet in His Own Country** - AFTER John was cast into prison, our Lord came and dwelt in Capernaum, thus fulfilling Isaiah 9:1-2 and 42:6-7. Mark tells us (1:14-15) that He came into Galilee saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel." Luke tells us that He came to Galilee "in the power of the spirit." At Nazareth, His own hometown, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day "as His custom was." It reminds us of Paul entering the synagogue of the Jews in Thessalonica "as his manner was." It is not the custom or manner of many nowadays, even many Christians, to follow this example.

Anyone might address the congregation, so our Lord stood up to read. He took His text from Isaiah 61:1-2: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." It is significant that He did not read the

next statement from Isaiah: "and the day of vengeance of our God." This has to do with judgment, and that will follow when Messiah comes again. His message then was one of grace. Following this reading, our Lord made a clear claim of Messiahship: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." But He knew they would not receive Him, and He declared that truth—proven so many times since—that no prophet is accepted in his own country.

No doubt they were saying to Him, in thought at least, "Why don't you do the wonders here you did at Capernaum?" Our Lord then refers to Elijah and Elisha who had the same experience—were not appreciated at home, but did their greatest work among strangers. Here is a truth seldom mentioned today except to emphasize its exceptions. One hears occasionally, "So-and-so has proven an exception to the proverb about a prophet in his own country." But there is no doubt that preachers will fare better if they go to new fields rather than settle where all the neighbors know them by their first name. Familiarity does breed contempt, and a stranger from somewhere else with a poorer message will be received far better than home-talent with much to say. Perhaps it ought not be so, but it is.

It would seem to follow as an inevitable corollary that even after he has settled in a new field, it is not well for the average minister, at least, to be a "hail-fellow-well-met" on too many fish-frys and parlor get-togethers. People either look up to a preacher or down on him, and too much backslapping and "regular-fellow" tactics add little to his power on Sunday. He will be called cranky anyway by some people, no matter what he does; so it is well to stay apart—even too much—and have the respect of those who might pick weak spots in his armor in too much gadding around.

The Lord Jesus Christ found He could do no mighty works where He had grown up. The applications of the proverb which He stated should be more thoughtfully pondered today. None knew men so well as He, and any principle He proved true can scarcely be overruled by you and me. (Vance Havner)

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### Mark 1:16-17 Unlikely People

They were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." —Mark 1:16-17

Not only was the Son of God born in an unlikely location and of unlikely parents, He chose His first followers at an unlikely place. He didn't search the religious schools for the most learned scholars. He didn't look among the ranks of brilliant military leaders. He stayed away from skilled statesmen and famous orators. Rather, Jesus went to the shores of Galilee and called out four common fishermen—Peter and Andrew, James and John.

"Bad choice," some might say. "Uneducated. Tough characters. What would they know about starting a worldwide movement? They couldn't work a crowd if they had to."

Now, on behalf of fishermen everywhere, let me say that they have many positive traits. They must be resourceful, courageous, and patient. They must plan carefully and take care of their equipment. Such qualities are no doubt helpful in carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), but I don't think that's why Jesus chose those men. I believe He wanted to demonstrate how God can transform ordinary people into "fishers of men" (Mark 1:16-17).

God's work is often done by unlikely people from unlikely places—people like you and me. To be successful, we must follow the One who can make us fishers of men. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary work. By [David Egner](#)

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### Mark 1:15

"**Repent** (present imperative = command calling in essence for a "lifestyle" of repentance!), and **believe** (present imperative = command calling in essence for a "lifestyle" of belief!) in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).

Ever wondered about people who say they believe in Jesus yet demonstrate no evidence of a change of heart? They show no remorse for wrongdoing, no longing for righteousness. They lack repentance.

Several years ago a prominent underworld figure attended a large evangelistic crusade. Realizing that the cause of evil would be weakened if this man would be converted, those conducting the meeting witnessed to him about Christ. One night they urged him to "open the door" of his heart and let Jesus in. The man supposedly accepted the Lord, but as the months passed his lifestyle remained the same. When confronted with this fact, the gangster said that no one had told him that in saying yes to Jesus he would be turning his back on his former life. He knew of Christian football players, Christian cowboys, Christian politicians—why not a Christian gangster? When they explained the need for repentance, the man wanted nothing more to do with Christianity.

The Greek word for repentance, **metanoia**, means "to change the mind." This involves thinking rightly about sin, self, and God. We recognize that we are condemned sinners before God and unable to save ourselves. We turn from our self-sufficiency to Christ and by faith receive Him as our Savior.

If we are willing to repent, God will empower us. But we need to know that turning to Christ means turning from sin. We can't have

one without the other. —D. J. De Haan. Our Daily Bread

We do not repent in order to go to Christ; we go to Christ in order to repent.

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### **Mark 1:17 - First Fish**

In one of my photo albums is a picture of a friend cradling—no, hugging—a large fish to his chest as if he'd just found a long-lost friend. I ask myself, "Why is he sliming himself with that fish?" Then I remember: It was his first steelhead—ever!

I recall well my first "fish." I was driving along and thinking about what a friend had said the day before. He regularly leads people to faith in Jesus Christ, and I had asked him how he knew they were willing to talk about spiritual things. "It's easy," he replied. "I ask 'em."

"Well," I said to myself, "I can do that. I'll ask the next person I meet."

As it turned out, the next person I met was a student along the highway thumbing a ride. I picked him up and we chatted for a while. As we neared his destination, I turned to him and asked, "Do you have an interest in spiritual things?" He looked at me for a moment and replied, "I've been looking for God all my life. Can you tell me how to know Him?" He was my first "fish" (Mark 1:17).

Not all our efforts are so rewarding, but here and there are people whom God's Spirit is drawing to the Savior (John 6:44). You can be part of that process. There is no greater joy than to be a fisher of men! —[David Roper](#)

I love to tell the story,  
For some have never heard  
The message of salvation  
From God's own holy Word. —Hankey

Fishers of men cast their nets in faith and draw them in with love.

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### **Mark 1:17 - Fish Hard**

Okay, I admit it. I like to fish. No, I'm not the buy-the-latest-bass-boat, get-out-every-weekend kind of guy. But I enjoy fishing for walleyes at a nearby dam in the summer or catching perch through the ice on one of Michigan's many lakes in winter.

That makes me interested in things related to fishing. So I was hooked when I saw this bumper sticker on the back of an old pickup truck:

Life's Short: Fish Hard

I chuckled, but the more I thought about it the more I was caught by this idea: As a follower of Jesus Christ, I am a "fisher of men." I have been commanded by the Lord Jesus to proclaim the gospel message (Matt. 28:19-20), to tell others about the wonderful, saving love of God for all people.

I thought too about the statement, "Life's short." It is! How quickly 10, 20, 30 years pass. All too soon our children are starting school, graduating, marrying, having children of their own. All too quickly those friends and family members we always wanted to talk to about Jesus Christ are no longer with us.

Yes, life is short. So, as obedient followers of Jesus Christ, let's "fish hard" to bring others to Him. —[David Egner](#)

Fishing Tips  
Go where the "fish" are.  
Use the right "bait."  
Be patient!

It's never out of season to fish for souls.

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### **Mark 1:17 - The True Hero of the Titanic**

John Harper was born to a pair of solid Christian parents on May 29th, 1872. It was on the last Sunday of March 1886, when he was thirteen years old that he received Jesus as the Lord of his life. He never knew what it was to "sow his wild oats." He began to preach about four years later at the ripe old age of 17 years old by going down to the streets of his village and pouring out his soul in earnest entreaty for men to be reconciled to God.

As John Harper's life unfolded, one thing was apparent...he was consumed by the word of God. When asked by various ministers what his doctrine consisted of, he was known to reply "The Word of God!" After five or six years of toiling on street corners preaching the gospel and working in the mill during the day, Harper was taken in by Rev. E. A. Carter of Baptist Pioneer Mission in London, England. This set Harper free to devote his whole time of energy to the work so dear to his heart. Soon, John Harper started his own church in September of 1896. (Now known as the Harper Memorial Church.) This church which John Harper had started with just 25 members, had grown to over 500 members when he left 13 years later. During this time he had gotten married, but was shortly thereafter widowed. However brief the marriage, God did bless John Harper with a beautiful little girl named Nana.

Ironically, John Harper almost drowned several times during his life. When he was two and a half years of age, he almost drowned when he fell into a well but was resuscitated by his mother. At the age of twenty-six, he was swept out to sea by a reverse current and barely survived, and at thirty-two he faced death on a leaking ship in the Mediterranean. Perhaps, God used these experiences to prepare this servant for what he faced next...

It was the night of April 14, 1912. The RMS Titanic sailed swiftly on the bitterly cold ocean waters heading unknowingly into the pages of history. On board this luxurious ocean liner were many rich and famous people. At the time of the ship's launch, it was the world's largest man-made moveable object. At 11:40 p.m. on that fateful night, an iceberg scraped the ship's starboard side, showering the decks with ice and ripping open six watertight compartments. The sea poured in.

On board the ship that night was John Harper and his much-beloved six-year-old daughter Nana. According to documented reports, as soon as it was apparent that the ship was going to sink, John Harper immediately took his daughter to a lifeboat. It is reasonable to assume that this widowed preacher could have easily gotten on board this boat to safety; however, it never seems to have crossed his mind. He bent down and kissed his precious little girl; looking into her eyes he told her that she would see him again someday. The flares going off in the dark sky above reflected the tears on his face as he turned and headed towards the crowd of desperate humanity on the sinking ocean liner.

As the rear of the huge ship began to lurch upwards, it was reported that Harper was seen making his way up the deck yelling "Women, children and unsaved into the lifeboats!" It was only minutes later that the Titanic began to rumble deep within. Most people thought it was an explosion; actually the gargantuan ship was literally breaking in half. At this point, many people jumped off the decks and into the icy, dark waters below. John Harper was one of these people.

That night 1528 people went into the frigid waters. John Harper was seen swimming frantically to people in the water leading them to Jesus before the hypothermia became fatal. Mr. Harper swam up to one young man who had climbed up on a piece of debris. Rev. Harper asked him between breaths, "Are you saved?" The young man replied that he was not. Harper then tried to lead him to Christ only to have the young man who was near shock, reply no. John Harper then took off his life jacket and threw it to the man and said "Here then, you need this more than I do..." and swam away to other people. A few minutes later Harper swam back to the young man and succeeded in leading him to salvation. Of the 1528 people that went into the water that night, six were rescued by the lifeboats. One of them was this young man on the debris. Four years later, at a survivors meeting, this young man stood up and in tears recounted how that after John Harper had led him to Christ. Mr. Harper had tried to swim back to help other people, yet because of the intense cold, had grown too weak to swim. His last words before going under in the frigid waters were "Believe on the Name of the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

While other people were trying to buy their way onto the lifeboats and selfishly trying to save their own lives, John Harper gave up his life so that others could be saved.

Sources for this article: "The Titanic's Last Hero" by Moody Press 1997, Scriptures are quoted from the King James Bible. John Climie, George Harper, & Bill Guthrie from "Jesus Our Jubilee Ministries" in Dallas, Oregon

Jesus is still looking for fishers of men. [Quoted by Rich Cathers](#)

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## **Mark 1:17 - Where Are The Fish?**

A pastor told me a fascinating story of a church in a Canadian fishing village. The founding fathers had chosen to build the church at the rocky edge of the Atlantic Ocean. Because it was located in the center of where the fishermen and townspeople lived, the church flourished.

As the congregation grew, however, the members decided to construct a new building far from the waterfront. Then an interesting thing happened. They seemed to lose their zeal for the lost after they moved. Why? Some said it was because they were no longer among the people.

We see in Mark 1 that Jesus began His ministry by walking along the Sea of Galilee and calling fishermen to be His disciples. He told them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (v.17).

Where are the “fish” in our communities? Do we expect them to come on their own to our church and hear the pastor present the gospel? Or have we chosen to follow Christ and become fishermen who dare to go to where the fish are, taking the message of life and hope to our schools and workplaces and neighborhoods?

Just as we won't catch fish in a kitchen sink, we can't “catch” souls if we don't go where they are. -[David Egner](#)

You do not have to cross the seas  
Nor foreign lands explore  
To share God's Word with needy souls—  
You'll find them right next door. —Anon.

After accepting Christ's invitation to come, we must obey His commission to go.

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### **Mark 1:17 - "Follow Me"**

When the United States launched its space program in 1958, seven men were chosen to become the first astronauts. Imagine the excitement of Scott Carpenter, Gordon Cooper, John Glenn, Gus Grissom, Walter Schirra, Alan Shepard, and Deke Slayton. They were selected to go where no one had ever gone before.

Yet, as astronauts they knew they would face unforeseen dangers, challenges, and trials. Each of them realized that the thrill of being chosen was tempered with the fear of the unknown future.

Imagine another set of men who were chosen for an important mission: the 12 apostles Jesus chose one day on a mountainside near the Sea of Galilee. These men left behind their occupations and families to dedicate themselves to this radical new teacher. They didn't know what kind of political, religious, or financial challenges they would face. Yet they followed Jesus.

Jesus asks the same of His people today. He asks each of us to follow Him, to love Him, to obey Him, and to tell others about Him. Like the apostles, we don't know what our commitment to Jesus might bring.

Lord, help us to follow You faithfully and to trust You completely with our future. -[Dave Branon](#)

I am resolved to follow the Savior,  
Faithful and true each day;  
Heed what He sayeth, do what He willeth—  
He is the living way. —Hartsough

Following Jesus is always right—but not always easy.

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### **Mark 1:18 Life Beyond The Rituals**

They immediately left their nets and followed Him. —Mark 1:18

A royal dignitary was greeting residents at a nursing home, when he was surprised by the unresponsiveness of one woman who just sat there and stared at him. Finally, the dignitary asked, “Do you know who I am?”—to which the woman responded: “No. But that nurse over there helps us with those kinds of things.”

Many people are confused about who Jesus is. But through His Word, God helps us know and enjoy the real Jesus. You will find Him wonderfully compelling. Tough fishermen, tax collectors, and zealots gave up everything to follow Him (Mark 1:18). Women felt safe with Him. Crowds stood in awe of His power and authority.

Jesus is not content to be just our “fire insurance,” saving us from eternal punishment in hell. Rather, He wants us to know Him for who He really is, and He desires to connect with us on a deeper, more personal level.

If you are weary of a religion that is about rules and regulations, then welcome to life beyond the rituals. Welcome to a relationship in which you can find companionship, comfort, wisdom, and reality. Welcome to the wonderful privilege of getting to know Jesus and the joy of following Him. Get to know Him—and you'll grow to love Him more and more each day. - [Joe Stowell](#)

Which of all our friends, to save us,  
Could or would have shed their blood?  
But our Jesus died to have us  
Reconciled in Him to God. —Newton

To know Jesus is to love Jesus.



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## Mark 1:20 - Walking In His Dust

In the first century, a Jewish man who wanted to become a disciple of a rabbi (teacher) was expected to leave family and job to join his rabbi. They would live together 24 hours a day—walking from place to place, teaching and learning, studying and working. They discussed and memorized the Scriptures and applied them to life.

The disciple's calling, as described in early Jewish writings about basic ethics, was to "cover himself in the dust of [the rabbi's] feet," drinking in his every word. He followed his rabbi so closely that he would "walk in his dust." In doing so, he became like the rabbi, his master.

Simon, Andrew, James, and John knew that this was the type of relationship to which Jesus was calling them (Mark 1:16-20). So immediately they walked away from their work and "went after Him" (v.20). For 3 years they stayed close to Him—listening to His teaching, watching His miracles, learning His principles, and walking in His dust.

As Jesus' followers today, we too can "walk in His dust." By spending time studying and meditating on His Word and applying its principles to life, we'll become like our rabbi—Jesus. - [Anne Cetas](#)

What holds me back? Some earthly tie? A thirst for gain?

A strange entanglement with life? A pleasure vain?

Dear Lord, I cast it all aside so willingly;

The path of true discipleship I'll walk with Thee. —Adams

Faith in Christ is not just a single step—it's a lifelong walk with Him.

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## Mark 1:16-20 - "Follow Me"

THE call of the fishermen disciples by the sea (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20) was really a second call, a call to service. Peter, Andrew and John were already disciples, having first followed Christ as recorded in John 1:35-51.

Notice that our Lord uses the same figure for their new work as the work they had been following: "fishers of men." The Lord exalts and spiritualizes our work, transforms it into a heavenly calling. Here, certainly, is a call to soul-winning, a vocation not popular with many Christians. Some, falling back upon predestination, argue that God will convict and save those whom He chooses. That is true, but one of the means He uses to convict the unsaved is the ministry of a personal worker.

The disciples followed "straightway," which implies that much still must be learned. Peter followed in much self-will and had to be humbled and broken in self before he could respond to the later "follow Me" of Tiberias (John 21:19). The two "follow Me's" in his life are full of meaning for us: it is not every one who has followed from Galilee who will follow from Tiberias.

In Luke 5:1-11 we have an incident probably parallel to this call by Galilee. After teaching in Peter's boat, our Lord ordered them to launch into the deep and let down their nets for a draught. "For a draught," mind you—He expected results. Our Lord often orders us into deep water after we have toiled all night in vain. Notice the "nevertheless" in Peter's reply, "We have taken nothing; nevertheless at Thy word..." We must come to the end of self, our own striving, and then obey His word. From "we" to "Thy" is a transition for the Christian fisherman that never fails to obtain results.

The results were overwhelming. Where they had failed all night they made their greatest catch. We have come, today, to where we expect little when we fish for souls. Much striving without our Lord has produced nothing—and we neither hear nor heed His command. He Himself is not in the boat, that is the trouble. We have improved nets and standard instructions and good intentions, but the nets are not filled. We are not working in His fellowship and at His word.

Peter was convicted at the wonder of the catch and fell at the Lord's knees confessing his sinfulness. True success does not elate us with ourselves but convicts us of our sinfulness. Our Lord's reply shows that He meant to join the lesson taught there with spiritual soul-winning: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

Meager results among Christians and churches are excused today with many flimsy arguments: we need not expect great revivals, we are told; it is the last days, and conditions are as in the days of Noah. To save our faces and keep the appearances going, children are graded into church from the Sunday schools. The real trouble is, we are toiling in our own strength; the Lord is not in the boat, and we are not obeying His word. Christians and churches venture on campaigns and programs of their own while the Lord is left out and His instructions are ignored.

If we met these conditions, once more the nets would fill, we should overcome at His feet, and He would commission us afresh to fishing for men. (Vance Havner)

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## Mark 1:29-31 - The Fever Cure

- IN Mark 1:29-31, we have the terse, simple account of the healing of Peter's wife's mother. From the synagogue, the Lord Jesus enters Simon's home. Simon's mother-in-law is sick with a fever. They tell Jesus about her. He takes her by the hand, the fever leaves her. She arises and ministers unto them.

We live in a world sick with a persistent fever. No word can describe the present international condition better than "feverish."

Business has a fever. Religion the world over has a fever. We individuals live in a fever. Life may be spelled in three words: "Hurry, Worry, Bury." We are getting on—but on where?

With some it is a fever of getting or spending, amassing the wealth of earth. The love of money is the root of all evil, and men are sick with that root disease. With some it is a fever of worry, fear, doubt—all of them close kin. With some it is ambition. Napoleon had a fever. Later, Hitler and Mussolini had it. And we lesser fry do not escape it. With some it is an evil spirit of unlove, bitterness, grudges that fester and create a fever that spoils all peace and joy. There is no peace to the wicked, for they are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Christians, too, do not enter into God's rest and so live with a fever of self and flesh.

They told Jesus of the woman sick with a fever. "Are you weary? Are you heavy-hearted? Tell it to Jesus," says the old hymn, and that is the only recourse that prevails. We tell our souls to flee like a bird to this and that mountain, but there is rest only in the Lord. Notice that others told Jesus of this case. We are to bring our fevered loved ones to the Lord.

He came and lifted her up, and the fever left her. How true throughout the ages! His touch turned James and John—sons of thunder—into calm, steady witnesses. His touch transformed Simon Peter—wilful, impulsive—into a rock. His touch transformed Saul—zealous Pharisee—into a mighty preacher. That does not mean that we become lifeless and dull when the fever departs. To put off the old man is not to "put on the old woman." When we are suffering from a fever, we are of no benefit to others; we are taken up with ourselves. It is when we are freed from the fever that we can help others, being set free from ourselves. That leads us to this last consideration: The woman arose and ministered unto others. The Lord wants to heal our fevers so that we may serve Him with joy and peace. Serving Christ is the joyful expression of souls set free from their fevers and now free to help others. And there is no fretting in such service.

What is your fever? Let Him heal you that you may minister. (Vance Havner)

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## Mark 1:35

WHEN we set aside time to study the Bible, read a devotional guide, and pray, we may feel as if we are doing God a favor. We think that the primary reason to spend time with God is to make Him happy.

But look at the devotional life of Jesus. Why did He set aside time to pray? Mark 1:35 describes what Jesus did just prior to His first preaching tour of Galilee. Before He began to teach, He went to a desert place to pray.

On another occasion mentioned in Luke 5, Jesus' ministry was gaining fame, causing more and more people to come to Him. How did Jesus meet the challenge? "He . . . often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (Lk 5:16). And in Matthew 14:23, Jesus had spent time with God just before He rescued the disciples from a storm at sea.

Jesus established a pattern for us to follow. First He drew aside and prayed; then He went out to help others. Our time alone with God should both prepare and motivate us to do good works. Devotion to God leads not to withdrawal from others but to a life dedicated to helping others in God's power--J D Branon. Our Daily Bread

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## Mark 1:35 - In The Morning

In the morning . . . He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. —Mark 1:35

Are you so rushed during the day that you find it hard to take even a few minutes to spend with God? Many people set aside time in the early morning before they get caught up in the hectic pace of the day.

I read about a very busy man who somehow manages to find time for giving the day a spiritual jump-start. He's Dr. Ben Carson, chief of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Children's Center, a position he assumed in 1984 when he was only 33 years old.

Here's Carson's testimony about the value of putting spiritual things first: "I've found that having a morning ritual—meditation or some quiet reading time—can set the tone for the whole day. Every morning, I spend a half-hour reading the Bible, especially the book of Proverbs. There's so much wisdom there. During the day, if I encounter a frustrating situation, I think back to one of the verses that I read that morning."

Jesus faced busy days filled with demanding crowds of people. In Mark's gospel we read, "In the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed" (1:35).

Do you take time to read God's Word and pray? Try it in the morning. It can transform your day.[Vernon C. Grounds](#)

In the stillness of the morning,  
Before a busy day of care,  
How sweet to be alone with God



Through His holy Word and prayer. —Anderson

Let Christ be first in your thoughts in the morning, and last in your thoughts at night.

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### **Mark 1:35 Early in the Morning** ([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

In college I discovered the habit of rising early to hear His voice. My school required students to rise at 6:15, and, after showering and dressing, to devote a half hour to personal devotions before breakfast. I resisted at first, but it gradually became an ingrained habit.

British army chaplain Bishop Taylor Smith testified, "As soon as I awake each morning, I rise from bed at once. I dress promptly. I wash myself, shave, and comb my hair. Then fully attired, wide-awake and properly groomed, I go quietly to my study. There, before God Almighty and Christ my King, I humbly present myself as a loyal subject to my Sovereign, ready and eager to be of service to Him for the day."

- Early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood before the Lord. Genesis 19:27
  - Early in the morning Jacob took the stone that was near his head and set it up as a marker. He poured oil on top of it and named the place Bethel. Genesis 28:18-19
  - Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He got up, went out, and made His way to a deserted place. And He was praying there. Mark 1:35
  - Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb at sunrise. Mark 16:2
  - [Early in the morning my song shall rise to Thee.](#)—Reginald Heber (Pause and sing this hymn to Him in spirit and in truth!)
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### **Mark 1:35 - Break The Routine**

When He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. —Matthew 14:23

When was the last time you read the Bible while sitting under an oak tree? Have you ever prayed while the cool water of a creek ran across your feet? Wouldn't it be enjoyable to meditate on God's Word while watching the sun come up over the horizon?

It's not possible, of course, for all of us to do all those things—but it is possible for each of us to break the normal routine of our time alone with God. Sometimes, the habits of our devotional life can get in the way of our growing closer to God. In fact, at times they can grow stale and boring.

But there is nothing boring about a God who created the earth in all its splendor and variety. There is no lack of excitement in worshiping a Savior who was willing to die a horrible death for us and pay the penalty for our sins. There is nothing common about being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to accomplish God's will.

So how do we avoid dry devotional times? By breaking the routine of the usual and adding some variety to our personal time alone with God.

In His worship, Jesus found solitary havens away from the busyness of people and ministry (Mark 1:35). We need to do the same. We need to break the routine.

THINKING IT THROUGH - Are you spiritually dry? Try changing the routine of your quiet time with the Lord—a different time, place, method, book of the Bible, or topic.

Time spent with the Lord is time well spent. - [Dave Branon](#)

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**Mark 1:35** - "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35). Our Lord found both time ("a great while before day") and place ("a solitary place") for prayer. We are hard put to it these days to find either but find them we must for what we are at prayer is what we are and nothing more.

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**Mark 1:35-39** - It is said that [Andrew Bonar](#), a great man of prayer, had three rules: (1) Not to speak to any man before speaking to Jesus; (2) Not to do anything with his hands until he had been on his knees; (3) Not to read the papers until he had read his Bible. - (Keith L. Brooks, Essential Themes)

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**Mark 1:45 - A Better Way Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter. Mark 1:45.**

Let the bible scholars account for it as they will, over and over again Jesus discouraged publicity, left the crowd for the solitudes, and

never played up to the multitude. His brethren could not understand why He did not go up to Jerusalem and get in the public eye. He did not seek the crowd, the crowd sought Him.

All this would be quite incomprehensible to this age of ballyhoo and the despair of high-pressure advertising. The Early Church grew as one brought another, and the Lord added such as should be saved. The Gospel was its own best publicity. By word of mouth it was noised about. Today we build up a gigantic publicity after the fashion of this age, but what we advertise does not come up to the advance notices. The mountain brings forth a mouse.

God's ways are not ours and the church did her mightiest work unassisted by radio, television, and modern advertising. The best publicity the Gospel will ever have is a new Christian out to win others. And simple arithmetic shows that if each new disciple brought another the statistics would soon be phenomenal. Maybe we have it all figured out wrong. Think it over. (Vance Havner)

## Mark 2

### Mark 2:8 J R Miller

Christ sees into people's lives and knows all that is going on in them. He saw faith in the men who brought their friend to Him that he might be healed. Then He saw into the man's own life, its past and its present, and knew that the paralysis was not his worst trouble, that he needed more to have his sins forgiven than to have his sickness cured.

He also read the thoughts of the scribes. They reasoned in their hearts, and Jesus knew their thoughts. Then He saw in the publican the qualities which fitted him for being an apostle.

It should be both a restraint and an encouragement for us to think that Christ knows all of us - the most secret things, that we can hide nothing from Him. It should make us most careful how we live.

Then it should be an inspiration to us, encouraging us always to be faithful. He knows when we try, though we fail. He knows when we are sincere, though in our weakness we do wrong. He knows that Peter loved Him, though he had denied Him.

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**Mark 2:5 Can Jesus See Your Faith?** Doug Nichols of Bothell, Washington writes, "While serving with Operation Mobilization in India in 1967, tuberculosis forced me into a sanitarium for several months. I did not yet speak the language, but I tried to give Christian literature written in their language to the patients, doctors, and nurses. Everyone politely refused. I sensed many weren't happy about a rich American (to them all Americans are rich) being in a free, government-run sanitarium. (They didn't know I was just as broke as they were!)

The first few nights I woke around 2:00 A.M. coughing. One morning during my coughing spell, I noticed one of the older and sicker patients across the aisle trying to get out of bed. He would sit up on the edge of the bed and try to stand, but in weakness would fall back into bed. I didn't understand what he was trying to do. He finally fell back into bed exhausted. I heard him crying softly.

The next morning I realized what the man had been trying to do. He had been trying to get up and walk to the bathroom! The stench in our ward was awful. Other patients yelled insults at the man. Angry nurses moved him roughly from side to side as they cleaned up the mess. One nurse even slapped him. The old man curled into a ball and wept. The next night I again woke up coughing. I noticed the man across the aisle sit up and again try to stand. Like the night before, he fell back whimpering.

I don't like bad smells, and I didn't want to become involved, but I got out of bed and went over to him. When I touched his shoulder, his eyes opened wide with fear. I smiled, put my arms under him, and picked him up. He was very light due to old age and advanced TB. I carried him to the washroom, which was just a filthy, small room with a hole in the floor. I stood behind him with my arms under his armpits as he took care of himself. After he finished, I picked him up, and carried him back to his bed. As I laid him down, he kissed me on the cheek, smiled, and said something I couldn't understand.

The next morning another patient woke me and handed me a steaming cup of tea. He motioned with his hands that he wanted a tract. As the sun rose, other patients approached and indicated they also wanted the booklets I had tried to distribute before. Throughout the day nurses, interns, and doctors asked for literature.

Weeks later an evangelist who spoke the language visited me, and as he talked to others he discovered that several had put their trust in Christ as Savior as a result of reading the literature. What did it take to reach these people with the gospel? It wasn't health, the ability to speak their language, or a persuasive talk. I simply took a trip to the bathroom.

Does your relationship with the Lord affect your actions? Can Jesus see your faith? Can the people around you see that you're different? They'll pay attention to your words if your actions say something too. ([Quoted by Rich Cathers](#))

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## Mark 2:1-12

**Chance Encounter** - Down on his luck, British writer Michael Arlen went to New York in 1944. To drown his sorrows he paid a visit to the famous restaurant "21." In the lobby, he ran into film producer Samuel Goldwyn, who offered the somewhat impractical advice that he should buy racehorses. Arlen then met Louis B. Mayer, an old acquaintance, who asked him what were his plans for the future.

"I was just talking to Sam Goldwyn —" began Arlen.

"How much did he offer you?" interrupted Mayer.

Arlen hesitated. "Not enough," he replied evasively.

"Would you take \$15,000 for 30 weeks?" asked Mayer.

"Yes," Arlen answered without a moment's hesitation.

That chance encounter was just what Michael Arlen needed.

So was the encounter experienced by the paralytic in Mark 2. But his meeting with Jesus wasn't by chance. It occurred through the loving devotion of his close friends. They weren't about to let slip the opportunity to bring him to Jesus, and as a result this man experienced one of the Bible's great miracles. As Jesus taught in a room jammed with people, He may have felt particles of dirt falling on His head. He and the crowd looked up to see daylight streaming through a growing hole in the roof. Then the needy man was lowered through the opening.

Jesus' response amazes us no matter how often we read this familiar story. He took care of the greater problem first, forgiving the man's sins. This angered Jesus' opponents (Mk 2:6, 7), who reasoned that only God could forgive sins. To prove His authority over sin, Jesus invoked His authority over sickness: to the paralytic He said, "Get up, take your mat and go home" (Mk 2:11). The man whose body had been motionless, did just as Jesus commanded.

As amazed as the crowd must have been by sight of a man being lowered through a roof, they were more amazed when they saw him walk out of the house with his mat under his arm. They said, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mk 2:12)—and that was never more true than with Jesus. - Today in the Word, May 23, 1993

**Mark 2:1-12 Bringing Our Friends to Jesus** - When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Mark 2:5

During my childhood, one of the most feared diseases was polio, often called "infantile paralysis" because most of those infected were young children. Before a preventive vaccine was developed in the mid-1950s, some 20,000 people were paralyzed by polio and about 1,000 died from it each year in the United States alone.

In ancient times, paralysis was viewed as a permanent, hopeless condition. But one group of men believed Jesus could help their paralyzed friend. While Jesus was teaching in the village of Capernaum, four of the men carried the man to Him. When they couldn't reach Jesus because of the crowd, "they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on" (Mark 2:1-4).

Jesus is the only One who can meet our deepest needs.

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven' " (v. 5), followed by "Get up, take your mat and go home" (v. 11). How remarkable that in response to the faith of the men who brought their friend, Jesus forgave his sins and healed his incurable condition!

When someone we know is facing serious physical difficulty or a spiritual crisis, it is our privilege to join together in prayer, bringing our friends to Jesus—the only One who can meet their deepest needs.

Lord Jesus, we know that You can speak the words of eternal life and healing to people in great need. We bring them to You in prayer today. [David McCasland](#)

Praying for others is a privilege—and a responsibility.

INSIGHT: Capernaum was a fishing community on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, which essentially became the headquarters of Jesus' northern ministry (Matt. 4:13). Home to Peter, James, John, and Andrew—four of Jesus' disciples—Capernaum was an important village on a major trade route. The name Capernaum means "the village of Nahum," and Nahum was

one of the Old Testament prophets. This fact seems to have been conveniently ignored by the religious leaders of Jesus' day who, when debating His legitimacy as a prophet, said, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee" (John 7:52). Bill Crowder

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**Follow Me** - Read: Mark 2:13-17 |

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. Mark 2:17

Health clubs offer many different programs for those who want to lose weight and stay healthy. One fitness center caters only to those who want to lose at least 50 pounds and develop a healthy lifestyle. One member says that she quit her previous fitness club because she felt the slim and fit people were staring at her and judging her out-of-shape body. She now works out 5 days a week and is achieving healthy weight loss in a positive and welcoming environment.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus came to call the spiritually unfit to follow Him. Levi was one such person. Jesus saw him sitting in his tax collector's booth and said, "Follow me" (Mark 2:14). His words captured Levi's heart, and he followed Jesus. Tax collectors were often greedy and dishonest in their dealings and were considered religiously unclean. When the religious leaders saw Jesus having dinner at Levi's house with other tax collectors, they asked, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (Mk 2:16). Jesus replied, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk 2:17).

Jesus came to save sinners, which includes all of us.

Jesus came to save sinners, which includes all of us. He loves us, welcomes us into His presence, and calls us to follow Him. As we walk with Him, we grow more and more spiritually fit.

Read Acts 9:10-19 and see how one man obeyed God and welcomed someone who was considered spiritually unfit. What were the results? How can you reach out to those who need the Savior? How can you help your church become a more welcoming place for the spiritually unfit?

Jesus' arms of welcome are always open.

INSIGHT: Mark 2:13–17 and Luke 5:27–32 both tell the story of Jesus calling a man named Levi to be His disciple. It appears that Levi was employed by Herod Antipas to collect tolls (travel taxes) from those outside of his territory who passed through Capernaum. There is almost universal agreement that the Levi in Mark 2 and Luke 5 is the apostle Matthew, since Matthew is identified as a tax collector and his own calling mirrors the calling of Levi (Matt. 9:9-12). After Levi started his new life as an apostle, he was called by his Greek name—Matthew—which means "gift of God." By [Marvin Williams](#)

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## **Mark 2:22**

New wine into fresh wineskins.

Ah, our Lord! Thou hast been speaking of the bridegroom and his coming to the feast. Thou remindest us of the olden comparison of thy love as better than wine, and of thy first miracle at Cana of Galilee. May thy love be poured into ear hearts as the fresh juice crushed from the grapes! We have no love of our own to offer Thee; but, oh, pour thy love into hearts that yearn to love Thee with thy love. And let it not be only the memory of the love that was, but the living, fresh enjoyment of the love that is ever new. The new wine of thy love is what we long for, that it may sweep into our hearts as the spring tide along the golden sands, which it frees from their accumulation of débris and waste. Oh for the constraints of thy love — new, fresh, living!

But the Master says, Children, if you have your request, the new wine may refuse to take on with the old shapes; it will make for itself new channels and forms of manifestation; when others fast, you will feast; when others feast, you will be sad. You will be counted eccentric and peculiar. Men will murmur at you, and find fault. They may even cast you out of their churches and social circles.

There is but one answer: Leave us not to ourselves. Permit us not to follow the promptings and suggestions of our undisciplined wills; but provide for us the new wine-skins also. Show us what Thou wouldst have us be and do; and let the methods in which our hearts' devotion shall express itself be so lovely, so befitting, so helpful to the world, and so full of God, that men may recognize thy hand, and adore Thee. Let not thy love be spilled, but stored for the refreshment of others; through our lives. Oh, give us love! - Meyer, F. B Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 2:23- 3:12 - Lord of the Sabbath** - THREE of the Gospels (Matt. 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:12; Luke 6:1-11) record our Lord's Sabbath-day experience in the barley fields, His conflict with the Pharisees on that point, and the healing of the withered hand. He

and His disciples did not violate the Law in eating the grain, for it was expressly permitted in Deuteronomy 23:25, but they simply violated Jewish tradition imposed by the scribes and Pharisees.

Our Lord gave an unanswerable five-fold argument for His attitude toward the Sabbath. He cited the case of David and the shewbread, the fact that the priests were busy on the Sabbath, the reference in Hosea about God desiring mercy rather than sacrifice, the fact that the Sabbath was made for man rather than man for the Sabbath, and then, the climax of all, that He Himself was Lord of the Sabbath. There are those today who overlook the fact that the Sabbath was done away with in Christ, along with all Jewish ordinances. We observe the Lord's Day not because of any definite New Testament command but because it was the day of our Lord's resurrection, the meeting-day of the early Church, and because it meets the principle of one day of rest in seven. We are not to judge one another, however, in regard to days (Col. 2:16) unless false doctrine arises which would revert to legalism instead of the principle of grace. For Sunday is not a "Christian Sabbath." The Sabbath was never changed but it was abolished, and we are not under law.

After His break with the Pharisees our Lord went into their synagogue—"their" synagogue, mind you—and healed the man with the withered hand. Mark tells us that He looked on His accusers with anger. He had nothing but anger for that religiousness which put a custom above human need. We talk much of the meek and lowly Jesus, but there were other aspects to His character. We need to recover His hatred of sin—His condemnation of whatever stood in the way of the will of God and the good of others.

The healing of the withered hand, far from bringing joy to those who witnessed it, only fanned the flames of opposition. What a depravity that can make of such a blessing an incentive to murder! But that is exactly what occurred here, for our Lord's enemies took counsel how they might destroy Him. No wonder that it should be the unpardonable sin when men can become so impervious to good as that!

Jesus withdrew to the sea, followed by multitudes whom He healed. Matthew here shows the fulfillment of Isaiah 42:1-4 in our Lord, God's chosen Servant, in whom He is well pleased; upon whom is His Spirit—showing mercy to the Gentiles, not striving nor crying. His voice was not heard in the streets. He turned meekly from Israel, arrayed against Him, because the time for judgment had not yet come. He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax until His Second Advent. Meanwhile, the Gentiles in this present age trust in Him. (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 2:28 Legalism vs. People**

There is something in us that likes to have rules. Rules keep things in their place. Rules keep things predictable. Rules help me know when I'm going the wrong direction.

Yet sometimes our rules can get kind of silly.

#### **Illustration**

- Young girls are never allowed to walk a tightrope in Wheeler, Mississippi, unless it's in a church.
- In Blackwater, Kentucky, tickling a woman under her chin with a feather duster while she's in church service carries a penalty of \$10.00 and one day in jail.
- No one can eat unshelled, roasted peanuts while attending church in Idanha, Oregon.
- In Honey Creek, Iowa, no one is permitted to carry a slingshot to church except a policeman.
- No citizen in Leecreek, Arkansas, is allowed to attend church in any red-colored garment.
- Swinging a yo-yo in church or anywhere in public on the Sabbath is prohibited in Studley, Virginia.
- Turtle races are not permitted within 100 yards of a local church at any time in Slaughter, Louisiana.-- Robert W. Pelton in *The Door*. *Christian Reader*, Vol. 33, no. 5.

Sometimes our rules are good for things, but not for people.

Years ago there was a problem with Calvary Chapel when the hippies began to show up to church with bare feet. Some of the leaders were upset because this was going to get the new carpet dirty. Chuck's response: "If I have to choose between carpet or kids, I'll choose the kids. Take out the carpet." The carpet stayed. So did the kids.

The church was made for man, not man made for the church.

Falling back to living a life according to "the rules" demonstrates that we've lost the closeness of walking with Jesus, letting Him guide us.

Jesus came to bring the "new covenant" (Jer. 31:33) where God's laws would be written on our hearts, not on tablets of stone that we beat each other over the head with.

**Illustration** - Paul Tournier (1898–1986) wrote, I cannot keep count of the number of people in whom religion, the love of God and the desire to serve him, or even a quite secular ideal of perfection, lead only to a life of sterility, sadness, and anxiety. The fear of

sinning has killed all their spontaneity. The subtle analysis of their conscience has taken the place of that childlike simplicity of heart that Christ demands. All joy has been replaced by the pursuit of duty. They have come to the point of doing nothing that gives them pleasure, as if God, who loves us, never required any but disagreeable things of us! They make incredible efforts but win no victories. They are always comparing themselves with those they look upon as their betters.

**Illustration** - A. W. Tozer wrote, There is today an evangelical rationalism which says that the truth is in the Word and if you want to know truth, go learn the Word. If you get the Word, you have the truth. That is the evangelical rationalism that we have in fundamentalist circles: "If you learn the text you've got the truth."

This evangelical rationalist wears our uniform. He comes in wearing our uniform and says what the Pharisees ... said: "Well, truth is truth and if you believe the truth you've got it." Such see no beyond and no mystic depth, no mysterious or divine. They see only, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord."

They have the text and the code and the creed, and to them that is the truth. So they pass it on to others. The result is we are dying spiritually. To know the Truth, we must "know" the Son. ([Above Illustrations quoted by Rich Cathers](#))

## Mark 3

**Mark 3:5 - A TIME FOR ANGER** - And when he had looked round about on them with anger.... Mark 3:5.

It is time we rediscovered how much the Bible has to say about the wrath of God. It is time we remembered our Lord's look of anger, His driving the traders out of the temple, His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. It is time we called to mind that He will return in vengeance on His adversaries (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). It is the other side of love and, if there is a place for it in God's heart, there is room for it in the hearts of His people if for the same reason and expressed in the same way. We need an outbreak of holy indignation! (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 3:10 All who had diseases were pressing toward Him to touch Him.**

I read about a woman who told her husband, "Orson, I've been watching that young married couple across the street. Every morning when the husband leaves the house he kisses his wife good-bye, and every evening when he gets home he kisses her again and hugs her affectionately. Now why can't you do that?"

Orson replied, "Well, honey, I can't do that. I hardly know her."

He missed the point, but a lot of us miss the point. Sometimes my wife will say to me, "Robert, you haven't hugged me or kissed me all day."

I always delight to repair the damage.

There was once a lonely man who passed a bookstore while walking down the street. Looking in the window, he saw a book with the title How to Hug. He rushed in to buy the book, but to his chagrin he discovered it was the seventh volume of a dictionary. It covered all the words from "How" to "Hug."

Our church is a "hugging church," but not all churches are like that. I have a friend who died of Lou Gehrig's disease. He'd once belonged to my church in Nashville but moved away. He loved his new church, but the people there were more reserved in expressing their affection. "Sometimes," he told me, "I just need a hug."

Jesus knew how to have and to hold, so everyone wanted to touch Him. He knew the power of an appropriate, affectionate human-to-human touch. Make a point today to hug your spouse, your kids, or even a friend who needs a spot of love.

([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

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## Mark 3:14

He appointed twelve. This is the threefold work of the Church, and of each disciple.

**That we might be with Him.** — The Master dearly loves our company. Let us seek it more. Not necessarily praying, or praising, or learning — but just being quietly with Him. It was said of a holy man, Mons de Rentz, that his union and converse with God were so wonderful, that after he had spent several hours therein, he found himself in the end as if he had only then begun it, except only that he had then yet more desire to continue it. And at length he arrived to that height that it seemed as though he never ended it at all; being wholly and constantly in inward recollection and application to God. After whose example let us press, that we may enjoy like near approach to God, and our lives be suitably ordered for his glory.

**That He might send them forth to preach.** — He cannot come forth train the secret chamber of eternity to preach, as once He was



wont to do; and therefore He is ever raising up voices, witnesses, lips which He teaches how to speak, and touches with his live coal. Has He not sent you forth, if not by lip yet by life, to bear witness to his love? Like the seraphim, if you have two pairs of wings for reverent modesty, you have at least one pair for flight. On, breathe the prayer, Send me.

**That they might have authority over demons.** — The power of Satan is strong; it mastered Adam, but it mot more than its match in the Christ-nature. If that nature is regnant in you, you, too, will have power over all the power of the enemy, Nothing shall by any means hurt you, and you will be able to deliver others who have long been held captive. Meyer, F. B Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 3:16 - What's in a Surname?** And Simon he surnamed Peter. Mark 3:16.

Our Lord had two outstanding apostles, Peter and Paul. Peter He surnamed and Paul He renamed. To Peter He said, "Thou art Simon... thou shalt be called Cephas." A lot had to happen before the handful of sand become a rock. But Jesus saw not merely the man he was but the man he was to be. Not that our Lord went around "seeing the good in everybody," the latent possibilities, calling out "hidden powers." "He knew what was in man." He saw within Simon nothing that Simon could make of himself, but rather what God would make of him. To educate the old Adam is to make him doubly dangerous. To polish him is to render him far more deceptive. To make him more religious is to leave him tenfold more the child of hell. When Jesus saw Simon, he saw Peter, not by reformation but by transformation. "Thou art... thou shalt be." Move out of your name into your surname! Come to Him just as you are, and by His grace be what you may become! What's in a surname? Everything, when it means that! "And Simon he surnamed Peter." (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 3:20 -30 - The Unpardonable Sin** - THREE of the Gospels (Matt. 12:22-45; Mark 3:20-30; Luke 11:14-36) relate the healing of the blind and dumb demoniac and the controversy that followed. While the people were much impressed, the Pharisees accused our Lord of being in league with the devil. His answer was withering: "If I am in league with Satan, then he is fighting himself. So then, by what power do your exorcists cast out demons?"

He then speaks of Himself as the "stronger man" who binds the devil. Either we are with Christ or against Him: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad." There is no middle ground. Our Lord also gave the parable of the man who cleaned up his house, made a superficial reformation, but ended more demon-possessed than before. Christ, the stronger man, must take the devil's place in our hearts. The Christian life is not a mere cleaning-up, it is the possessing and filling of the life by Christ Himself. Otherwise it ends worse than it began.

Jesus also declared that since words reveal the heart, they will justify or condemn us in the day of judgment. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. He gave them the sign of Jonah, signifying His death and resurrection. Remember that all depends upon His being raised from the dead. If He rose not, our preaching and faith are vain (1 Cor. 15:14-19).

But what has concerned readers most in this passage is our Lord's statement about the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which has no forgiveness. Since words reveal the inner state, the blasphemy of the Pharisees in attributing Christ's work to the devil revealed their inner condition, and it is that inner state, rather than any act, that is beyond forgiveness. The spoken blasphemy is but the expression of the condition of a heart that has become impervious to good—has so long hardened itself against the light and resisted the truth that it regards good as evil. It is possible to reach such a condition in which one is so calloused to the good that it no longer makes any impression. It is not so much that they could not be saved if they wanted to be, or that God refuses to save them, as that they do not want to be saved and manifest no interest whatever. Unfortunately, many people have worried themselves sick thinking they had committed this sin, when the very fact that they are concerned shows they are not in such a condition! The very mark of the unpardonable sin is utter indifference to the light and the pleadings of the Spirit. Those who are guilty are not worrying about it.

But there is here a warning not to resist too long the gospel call. Just as every day one goes barefoot the feet become more toughened, so it is with the soul that tramples daily the grace of God. (Vance Havner)

There is a time I know not when, a place I know not where,  
Which marks the destiny of men to heaven or despair;  
There is a line by us not seen which crosses every path,  
The hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath.  
How long may man go on in sin, how long will God forbear,  
Where does hope end and where begin the confines of despair?  
One answer from the sky is sent, ye who from God depart,  
While it is called "today" repent and harden not your heart.

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**Mark 3:21 - "He Is Beside Himself"**

THIS cynical, bitter, and disillusioned old world needs to see more of ten the miracle of a man or woman desperately in love with Jesus Christ. This sophisticated generation runs all too rarely into the phenomenon of a human torch passionately happy to be the

fuel of the Flame of God. Such human firebrands as these sweep through the dead, dull world around them making ordinary Christianity look drearily tame and commonplace. To meet such a soul is like finding a visitor from another planet—as indeed it is meeting an ambassador from another realm, one whose citizenship is in heaven.

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth looking for one person who will really consent to burn up for God. We sing about it, preach about it, pray about it; but few are the reckless souls who actually will become fools for Christ's sake, who will love not their lives to the death, and count them not dear, who gladly will fling themselves with holy abandon at the feet of their Lord. We sing:

"To the old rugged Cross I will ever be true,  
Its shame and reproach gladly bear."

But we leave the reproach in the hymn book; to be counted the scum of the earth and the offscouring of all things is too much for us who love all too well to keep up with the Joneses. Ours is a respectable, comfortable faith; we will consent to attend a missionary meeting and listen to some scarred veteran tell of enduring hardship in a distant land. We may even shed a sympathizing tear and contribute gladly to let another perform the task. But for you or me to be consumed with the zeal of God's house until relatives shall grow solicitous about our mental state as did the friends of our Lord, or to stir up the gift of God within us until smouldering coals shall blaze into Heavenly Flame, and Festus complain that we are mad—ah, we much prefer our own comfort! "He is beside himself" (Mark 3:21). They said it of our Lord. "Thou art beside thyself" (Acts 26:24). They said it of Paul. "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God" (II Corinthians 5:13). They will say it of us if we walk in their steps. (And why shouldn't we be "beside ourselves"? We are nothing in ourselves!)

There are not two gospels, one for missionaries and martyrs, the other for those who name the name of Christ but let Him bear the Cross alone while they themselves go free. In the beginning of the Church it was not only the apostles who were beside themselves. That entire first fellowship of saints lived so truly like a colony of heaven, not conformed to the world but transformed, that the world hounded them and branded them as the wildest of fanatics. No wonder they shook the world! Such people have always been well-nigh irresistible. What can stand before a blood-washed, fire-baptized throng, rejoicing to be counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' name?

It is possible to know such a consuming love for Jesus Christ that one is lifted to a holy abandon and a heavenly recklessness and is hilariously immune to this world's fears and fevers. There are few men and women who have not been at some time in their lives so desperately in love with someone that they were beside themselves and often almost irrational in their exhilaration. If the love of man for woman can so intoxicate us, is it not to our everlasting shame that our hearts can be so unresponsive toward Christ Jesus, Lover of our souls? Must He not stand among us today, grieved at the hardness of our hearts, and say as He did long ago: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love"?

If we loved Him desperately, if we loved Him so passionately that all other loves were as hatred, if we loved Him as He deserves to be loved, would not our hearts rise above the circumstances and conditions of this dull world? Have you not seen young lovers so absorbed in each other that they were oblivious to all else? If we loved Him truly, would we not be unmindful of most things that concern and worry us now? And have you not noticed also how love makes the lover kindly disposed toward everyone except that one who would steal the affections? If we loved our Lord with the whole heart, we would love all men and hate only him who would break our communion, Satan, the archenemy of our souls.

We have toned down the first-century Christian fervour because it makes our insipid church life look pitiful in comparison. Scholars have endeavoured to establish that the characteristics of those early saints were not meant to be sustained down through the centuries—that the first flaming fervour was a sort of double portion to get the Church off to a good start!

But who can believe that God meant for His people to begin at a high pitch and then slip gradually off key through the ages as though He Who began such a good work were unable to continue it? Who dares to charge Almighty God with such unwisdom that would begin a work by raising high hopes which later He would not fulfill? Those early Christians were no favourites of God, enabled to live lives which never can be duplicated again. They simply paid the price, but we lazily excuse ourselves today by confining such power to the apostolic age, with the threadbare conclusion that "the day of miracles has passed." The day of miracles has not passed; the day of faith, miraculous faith, largely has passed!

The truth is that the early Christians were a despised sect, for the most part from the poorer and plainer classes, desperately in love with Christ and utterly beside themselves in their devotion to Him. They did not transform the world—they transcended it. It was only in later years, when Constantine made Christian profession easy and the Church ceased looking for the Lord to return and began trying to build heaven on earth, that Christians became "reasonable" and the world could live comfortably with them.

Let it not be forgotten that a twice-born and Spirit-filled Christian is always a contradiction to this old world. He crosses it at every point. From the day that he is born again, until he passes on to be with the Lord, he pulls against the current of a world forever going the other way. If he allows it, men will tone him down, steal the joy of his salvation, reduce him to the dreary level of the average. The real firebrand is distressing to the devil, and when a wide-awake believer comes along, taking the Gospel seriously, we can expect sinister maneuvering for his downfall. Alas, Satan receives no little aid from church members themselves in this matter, for most church folk dislike having their Laodicean complacency upset by those who insist on walking by faith and not by sight. There

are many who raise their eyebrows and shrug their shoulders and bid the flaming zealot, "Be not righteous over much!"

There is no denying that the present-day world set-up is as definitely of the prince of darkness as was the world of the New Testament, yes, even more so as the return of the Lord draws near. It cannot be argued that we are excused from living such otherworldly lives as did the early Christians because the world has now become more Christian and the contrast is therefore not so pronounced. The contrast is more pronounced nowadays than ever whenever a Christian really dares to live the transformed and not the conformed life. Whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God (cf. James 4:4); and, the time being short, we should live accordingly (I Corinthians 7:29-31). "Propriety" and formalism and dim, religious atmosphere have smothered the fire, and repressed Christians huddle over coals that need to be fanned into flame by the stirring up of the Gift of God within us. With some happy exceptions, too often we shall find the brightest flame in some humble church on a back street—which is quite in keeping with the early assemblies—and even there sometimes extravagances reveal that Satan, never-sleeping, is attending as an angel of light.

Living beside oneself is no new or fanciful thing. Men have lost themselves in lesser causes than Christ and the Gospel. Men have lost themselves again and again in a flaming devotion to art or literature or scientific research or exploration. The devil has shown us the opposite of devotion to Christ in the reckless abandon of Communists and anarchists to their causes. Patriotism numbers by the millions those who have flung themselves into the jaws of death for love of country. But only the man who is beside himself for the love of Christ has truly lost his life to find it.

Most of us never get beyond interest—and mild interest at that—in eternal issues. We need not wonder that revival fails to sweep the world, that we make slight impression upon this wretched generation. Men are not moved by merely interested people. It took Pentecost to stir Jerusalem, and it takes the terrific dynamic of the Holy Ghost, through flaming witnesses, to make this sleeping world sit up and listen to the wonderful works of God. If we who claim to know and love the Lord display but casual interest in the Prince of Glory, need we wonder that a cynical world sees no reason to be wrought up about the saving of the soul?

But why is our love for Christ so cold, and what may we do about it? I fear that many who name His name never really have met Him in conversion. I am convinced that we invite many church members forward for consecration who need first to be saved. And after conversion there must be communion. Love increases as we associate with the person loved. This we do with Christ through the Spirit by prayer and the Word. And by all means remember that oft-forgotten road of obedience: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John 14:21). We cannot love the Lord with human love, but only with the love of God, God's own love, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. But that heart must be hungry for His love, and willing, and obedient. And as His love is received by faith, it is expressed in love for the brethren, thereby proving that we have passed from death to life; and that love flows out in love for the lost whom God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son.

Yes, it is the apostolic fervour of men and women desperately in love with Jesus Christ that this calloused world needs to witness today. Nowhere has the devil been more successful than in toning down this early zeal to a pale churchly religiousness. Some would have us believe that people are too intelligent nowadays to return to camp-meeting emotionalism. Well, this is certainly a poor time to credit anything to increased intelligence! Besides, that theory does not account for the fact that the same intelligent people who sit unmoved at church can be beside themselves in hours of frenzy at a football game or a political mass meeting. No, there is still plenty of fervour in the land, but not about the Lord!

The happiest person on earth is a young Christian ablaze with the fire of a new faith before he has met too many theologians! For every man born blind who receives his sight, the devil has fifty Pharisees ready to cool his ardour. The saddest sight I know is a Bible scholar or preacher (often a fundamentalist) who has left somewhere among his books the first love of his Christian youth. Better blaze through with more zeal than knowledge than to lose the calliope notes of early faith in a maze of contradictory commentaries and expositions! Better crash through believing too much than too little. Methinks God must prefer a too exuberant faith that He must check a little (if such is possible) to a pale orthodoxy that says the words but really does not believe them.

God give us some fervid souls who will let no one quench the Spirit within them! (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 3:21** "He has lost His senses." - A psychiatrist was making his rounds at the state hospital one day when he entered a patient's room. He found patient #1 sitting on the floor, pretending to saw a piece of wood in half. Patient #2 was hanging from the ceiling by his feet. The doctor asked patient #1 what he was doing. The patient replied, "Can't you see? I'm sawing this piece of wood in half." The doctor inquired of patient #1 what patient #2 was doing hanging upside down from the ceiling. "Oh, he's my friend," #1 said, "but he's a little crazy. He thinks he's a light bulb." The doctor looked up and noticed that patient #2's face was turning red. The doctor asked patient #1, "If he's your friend, you should get him down from there before he hurts himself." #1 replied, "What? And work in the dark?" It seems as if Jesus' family thought at this time that Jesus was a little crazy. Have you ever had your family tell you that you were crazy for following Jesus? ([Quoted by Rich Cathers](#))

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## Mark 3:29

Hell: Here are a few characteristics of hell set forth in the New Testament:

It is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12).

It is a place where people scream for mercy, have memories, are tormented, feel alone, cannot escape (Luke 16:23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31)

It is a place of unquenchable fire (Mark 9:48)

It is a place of darkness (Revelation 9:2).

It is a place of eternal damnation (Mark 3:29KJV)

It is a place where God's wrath is poured out (Revelation 14:10)

It is a place of everlasting destruction (2Thes 1:9)

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**Mark 3:31-35 - The Family of the Spirit** - OFTEN we overlook the rich truths contained in those little incidents in the life of our Lord which take up little space and, therefore, receive too little attention. One such is found in the visit of His relatives (Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21).

The brothers of our Lord were puzzled by His ministry. John tells us that they did not believe in Him (7:5). And Mary, His mother, was far from that faultless character which she has been made out to be; our Lord made clear to her several times by gentle rebuke His greater loyalty to the Father (Luke 2:49; John 2:4). Now, while He was teaching the people, it appears that His mother and brethren made a rather unseasonable visit, perhaps to caution Him not to overtax Himself or maybe to warn Him not to bring down the wrath of the Pharisees. It is easy to see how well-meaning relatives could interfere with One who was pursuing a course so certain to bring trouble and so dangerously unusual.

Our Lord's answer, like so many of His replies, was abrupt and seemingly severe, but it was meant to bring out a great truth in a way that would command attention and make the audience sit up and take notice. He asks, "Who is My mother? And who are My brethren?" Then He declares, as He points out His disciples, "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother." He was declaring that His family was the spiritual fellowship of all who do the will of God. He was not ignoring or despising earthly relationships, which have their place and value; He was simply taking opportunity to illustrate the higher relationship of all who are children of God by faith in Himself.

This explains such sharp demands as that we must "hate" father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, and even our own lives, if we are to be His disciples (Luke 14:26). So much greater and higher is this heavenly relationship that our love for our relatives must be as hate compared with our love for Him. It also explains His terse refusal to let would-be disciples return home to bury their dead or bid their families goodbye (Luke 9:59-62). No ties of flesh and blood, no relationships of earth, are worthy to hinder our utter abandon to Him. We must ever beware of those, even of our families, who would tone us down or cramp our freedom with even the most well-meant advice if it runs counter to His will.

While, of course, this truth can be misapplied to the point of fanaticism, few today have reached its point. There must be loyalty to the highest that will brook no interference from even the closest hearts of earth. Many a man is hampered in his ministry today because of a divided affection. Unlike Jesus, he interrupts his work for the Father to confer with the relatives who wait. (Vance Havner)

## Mark 4

### Mark 4:4

**LOSING THE WORD** - As he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it. Mark 4:4

What a strange sight greeted my gaze as I looked out over the bay. There was old "Pete the pelican" bobbing around on the waves, and perched right on top of his head was a sea gull. Looking more closely I discovered that "Pete" had caught a fish, but its tail was sticking out one side of his huge beak. What a dilemma the old pelican was in! He had gotten his fish, but now to eat it he would have to open his mouth, and sitting right there ready to snatch it as soon as he did so was Mr. Sea Gull. He knew he had "Pete" right where he wanted him.

As I saw the wise old sea gull ready to grab the food from the pelican's mouth, I was reminded of Jesus' parable about the sower and the fact that as some seed fell by the wayside, "the fowls of the air came and devoured it." Jesus explained that this was a picture of Satan's tactics in taking the Word from the hearts of those who, although receiving the message of grace, fail to understand and believe it.

How important it is that we not only "receive" the Word, but also that we study it and meditate upon it. Unless we do so, we are the losers. It is possible for the "seed" to be sown in our hearts, and yet not to take root! How many there are who, having been really blessed by a message, come out of a church service, only to be met by friends who begin at once to talk about the weather, the ball game, business, world conditions—anything and everything but the Word of God which they have heard. And the first thing you know, that which had been received is snatched away, and the precious seed fails to bear fruit. The Psalmist declared, "Thy word have I hidden in mine heart . . ." (Ps. 119: 11). Remember, when the Word is sown, receive it gladly, meditate upon it intently, talk about it to others, memorize it, and then allow it to bring forth fruit in your life! Our Daily Bread

The seed of the Word falls on many a soil,

The fertile, the thorny, the hard;

Lest haply it fruitless in thy heart be sown,

Blest soul, be thou ever on guard. — H.G.B.

**Take heed to the Word; remember,  
a man's spirit needs daily food as well as his body!**

—Edmund Nelson

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## Mark 4:8, Mark 4:20

"Good Soil" - Other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased, and produced - Mark 4:8

John Chrysostom was one of the most captivating preachers of the early Christian church. However, he recognized that even great orators cannot make everyone listen.

Chrysostom noted, "My preaching is addressed to all..., but it is the duty of each one of my listeners to take what is suited for his affliction. I do not know who are sick, who are healthy. Therefore, I discuss subjects of every sort and suited to every illness."

In Mark 4, the parable of the sower and the soils teaches the importance of how we respond to the Word of God. It tells us the success or failure of a crop isn't necessarily in the skill of the farmer or in the power of the seed, but in the quality of the soil.

Some listeners are like rich soil, and the message takes root in their heart. Other audiences resemble the church parking lot, and the seed simply bounces off them. Still others are like a weed patch that chokes potential growth.

Preaching is not "the fine art of talking in someone else's sleep." We need to "drink in" the teaching of the Word just as the sick need medicine or as crops need rain. That's why Jesus urged, "Take heed what you hear" (v.24). Whether or not you benefit from a sermon is largely up to you. - H W Robinson. Our Daily Bread.

As planted seed in fertile soil

Has life and will take root,

God's Word, if nurtured in our own hearts,

Will grow and bring forth fruit.- Hess

**Thought for the Day: In good soil,  
the seed takes root and will soon bear fruit.**

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## Mark 4:19

Cares;... Riches;... Lusts.

There is enough nutriment in the land for the thorns alone or for the wheat alone, but not for both; and so there is a brief struggle, for mastery, in which the sturdy weed prevails against the slender wheat, and chokes it. Nourishment which should go to its support is drained away from it; and though it does not actually expire, it leads a struggling existence, and becomes unfruitful. What are these weeds?

**For the poor man — Cares.** — The Greek word for care is Division. Cares divide our heart, and distract it in many different directions. What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? How shall we meet our rent and other expenses? It is almost impossible to settle to our prayer, or Bible study, or Christian work, or to the culture of the soul-life, while

questions like these intrude. What shall the poor man do to prevent the word becoming unfruitful? He must take his cares to his Father, and by one act deposit them in his safe keeping. And thereafter, as a care tries to break in on the peace of his heart, he must treat it as a positive temptation, handing it over to God.

**Far the prosperous man — riches.** — They will distract as much as anxiety does. How much they amount to! Oh, the endless figurings in the brain—how to keep, or invest, or increase. The case for him is to look on all he has as a stewardship for God, deducting only a moderate percentage for himself.

**For us all — lusts.** — Strong and inordinate desires for what may be right in itself, but which we follow with extravagant zest. What is right in itself may become wrong if we put it in God's place, and allow it to monopolies us unduly. On, Great Husbandman, root up the thorns by thy Holy Spirit!

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 4:18-19** Today's New York Post has an article titled "Stress Mess in U.S." about a study by the American Psychological Association finding that 48 percent of Americans can't sleep at night because of stress. Seventy-five percent of Americans worry constantly about two things—money and work. Half of us are also stressed about paying our rent or mortgage. According to the report, stress and worry are taking a toll, leading us to fight with family members, drink, smoke, and gulp junk food like starving fools. It's leading to obesity, hypertension, heart disease, and cancer. In His parable of the sower, Jesus warned that too much stress can also damage us spiritually. When we're overwhelmed by all our tasks and desires, the stress strangles the Word in our hearts and hinders the crop. The biblical antidote is a simpler lifestyle, a deeper trust, and a daily walk with Christ. As the psalmist said, "As pressure and stress bear down on me, I find joy in Your commands" (Ps. 119:143 NLT). For starters, here's an old prayer that may help:

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.

—John Greenleaf Whittier, 1872

[\(My All in All - Robert J Morgan\)](#)

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**Mark 4:21 - The Bushel and the Bed** - "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed?" Mark 4:21

Christ is the Light of the world (John 8:12). Believers are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14). Our light is Christ within. We are to let our light shine, not shine it. It is to be a glow, not a glare. Two things hinder Christian testimony, the bushel and the bed. The bushel stands for business, commercialism, money-making. Your only business is to do the will of God. That is your vocation but most Christians treat it as a vacation, something to be done only once in a while. If you are a farmer, it really is God's farm; you are just the tenant. If you keep store, really it is God's store; you are but the clerk. Don't let the bushel smother the candle! The bed stands for pleasure, ease, worldly comfort. There is no testimony among those who are at ease in Zion. Churches are filled with "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4). And if "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6) what a host of animated corpses run around doing church work! Said the Irishman who saw a tombstone marked "I yet live": "If I was dead I wouldn't be ashamed to admit it!" But professing believers are dead and don't know it nor does Sardis know she is dead though she has a name to be alive. Beware the bushel and the bed! (Vance Havner)

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**Donald Trump & Riches** - Early in 1989, when Trump's bank account was still bulging, a writer asked Trump the inevitable question about what horizons were left to conquer. "Right now, I'm genuinely enjoying myself," Trump replied. "I work and I don't worry." "What about death?" the writer asked. "Don't you worry about dying?" Trump dealt his stock answer, one that appears in a lot of his interviews. "No," he said. "I'm fatalistic and I protect myself as well as anybody can. I prepare for things." This time, however, as Trump started walking up the stairs to have dinner with his family, he hesitated for a moment. "No," he said finally, "I don't believe in reincarnation, heaven or hell—but we go someplace." Again a pause. "Do you know," he added, "I cannot, for the life of me, figure out where." Donald Trump, investor and businessman. (Quoted in Pursuit magazine in an adaptation from the book What Jesus Would Say, by Lee Strobel, 1994, Zondervan)

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**Mark 4:24 - We Hear What Our Ears are Tuned To**- Anthropologist Ethal Alpenfels once told me about a woodsman who was walking down Fifth Avenue in New York City with a friend. All at once the woodsman said, "Why, I hear a cricket." "Nonsense," scoffed the city man. "In this uproar? Not a chance." "But I do," said the woodsman, "and I'll show you." At that he took a dime out of his pocket and dropped it on the pavement. Instantly, people within 30 feet turned around to see whose coin had dropped. "You see,"



said the woodsman, "people hear what their ears are tuned to. Mine happen to be tuned to crickets." (A. Purnell Bailey, columnist, Capper's Weekly)

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**Mark 4:24 - THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LISTENING** Take heed therefore how ye hear... Luke 8:18. What we hear is important (Mark 4:24), but it is equally important how we hear. Receiving with meekness the engrafted Word (James 1:21) is a solemn duty. One reason why we do not have many great preachers, is because we do not have many great listeners! It is just as important that Christians prepare to hear the sermon as it is that the preacher prepare to preach it. How few churchgoers ever think of readying ears and heart to hear the Word of God! We must be doers of the Word, of course, as well as hearers, but good hearing prepares for good doing. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 4:35 - No Worries** - Read: Mark 4:35–5:1 | Let us go over to the other side. Mark 4:35

A comfortable plane ride was about to get bumpy. The voice of the captain interrupted in-flight beverage service and asked passengers to make sure their seatbelts were fastened. Soon the plane began to roll and pitch like a ship on a wind-whipped ocean. While the rest of the passengers were doing their best to deal with the turbulence, a little girl sat through it all reading her book. After the plane landed, she was asked why she had been able to be so calm. She responded, "My daddy is the pilot and he's taking me home."

Though Jesus' disciples were seasoned fishermen, they were terrified the day a storm threatened to swamp their boat. They were following Jesus' instructions. Why was this happening? (Mark 4:35-38). He was with them but He was asleep at the stern of the craft. They learned that day that it is not true that when we do as our Lord says there will be no storms in our lives. Yet because He was with them, they also learned that storms don't stop us from getting to where our Lord wants us to go (5:1).

Storms don't stop us from getting to where our Lord wants us to go.

Whether the storm we encounter today is the result of a tragic accident, a loss of employment, or some other trial, we can be confident that all is not lost. Our Pilot can handle the storm. He will get us home.

What storms are you encountering today? Perhaps you have lost a loved one or are facing a serious illness. Perhaps you are having difficulty finding a job. Ask the Lord to strengthen your faith and take you safely through the storm to the other side.

We don't need to fear the storm with Jesus as our anchor.

INSIGHT: Jesus' calming of the storm is a remarkable witness to the power of our Creator over nature, for He spoke directly to the storm threatening the ship He and His disciples were in. He rebuked the wind and waves and said, "Quiet! Be still!" (4:39). The Greek word used here for "still" denotes the muzzling of a hostile animal. When we are overcome with worries and concerns, we can trust that our powerful Creator will still our fears. By [C. P. Hia](#)

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**Mark 4:35-41 - "What Manner of Man!"** - FULL of truth for us today is the Gospel account of our Lord stilling the tempest (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). Matthew tells us (8:18) that when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave orders to depart unto the other side of the sea. There is a time to mix with and minister to the crowd, and there is also a time to leave the crowd. Some of us, in our zeal to serve, stay with the crowd when we need to get away for rest and renewed strength.

Mark says the disciples took the Lord "even as He was" in the ship. Tired from the busy day, He soon fell asleep. The storm must have been terrific, for these disciples were seasoned fishermen for the most part, used to the waves, and yet they were alarmed. But no matter how fierce the tempest, they had seen our Lord perform His miracles, had witnessed His power over nature, and they should not have given way to panic. How typical of human nature! We believe in a Christ who works wonders. We believe, theoretically, in His supernatural power, but when the actual crisis arises, we are terrified. No wonder that He asks, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" This incident has been misinterpreted again and again. We have heard it applied in this way: Christ asleep in the boat is Christ in the believer, dormant, not called into action; but when the crisis arises, we may call upon Him and be delivered. But this is erroneous. If the disciples had more faith they would not have awakened our Lord, they would have let Him sleep. It was fear and not faith that led them to arouse Him. Besides, Christ is not supposed to be a dormant guest in our hearts, to be aroused only in emergency. He abides in us, and if we trusted as we ought we would rest in peace in any storm because, although at times He may seem to be asleep, we are sure of the fact of His presence—and that is enough.

We have grown accustomed to hearing this familiar story, but if we valued it aright we would cry out as did these disciples: "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Here He manifested His power over wind and wave, for all things are subject to Him by whom and for whom all things were made.

Mark also adds the significant little note: "And there were also with him other little ships." We are not alone upon life's sea. Other lives share in our blessing; and if the Lord is with us, His benefits to us reach out and indirectly bless others. All the little ships profited from our Lord's presence in one ship. The ship that carries Jesus liveth not unto itself. Even lives in which He does not dwell

personally are benefitted by His presence in our lives.

Is the Lord in your boat? At times He may seem asleep. He may answer you not a word. He may tarry as He did in Lazarus' sickness. But rest assured that if He be present, all things shall work together for good. Do not awaken Him in panic; rest upon His word, "Where is your faith?" (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 4:35–5:1 The Storms of Life** - You may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith . . . may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1 Peter 1:6-7

In the book of Mark we read about a terrible storm. The disciples were with Jesus on a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee. When a "furious squall came up," the disciples—among them some seasoned fishermen—were afraid for their lives (Mark 4:37-38). Did God not care? Weren't they handpicked by Jesus and closest to Him? Weren't they obeying Jesus who told them to "go over to the other side"? (v. 35). Why, then, were they going through such a turbulent time?

No one is exempt from the storms of life. But just as the disciples who initially feared the storm later came to revere Christ more, so the storms we face can bring us to a deeper knowledge of God. "Who is this," the disciples pondered, "even the wind and the waves obey him!" (v. 41). Through our trials we can learn that no storm is big enough to prevent God from accomplishing His will (5:1).

While we may not understand why God allows trials to enter our lives, we thank Him that through them we can come to know who He is. We live to serve Him because He has preserved our lives.

Lord, I know I don't need to fear the storms of life around me. Help me to be calm because I stand secure in You.

The storms of life prove the strength of our anchor. By [Albert Lee](#)

INSIGHT: In Mark 4:35–5:43 the gospel writer tells of four miracles to prove that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of God" and therefore has absolute authority over the forces of this physical world (4:35-41), over the powers of the spiritual world (5:1-20), over physical illnesses (5:24-34), and over death (5:35-43). These miracles were designed to answer the question, "Who is this?" (4:41). The first miracle was Jesus calming the storm on Galilee. Because the Sea of Galilee is in a basin about 700 feet below sea level and is surrounded by mountains, sudden and violent storms are common (v. 37). That Jesus was tired and soundly asleep showed that He was fully human (v. 38); that the storm instantly obeyed Him showed He was divine (v. 39). Sim Kay Tee

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## Mark 4:35-41

**Facing Hardships** - Even when believers follow Christ's bidding, they may face hardships. For example, Jesus' disciples were doing God's will when they took Him across the lake, for he had commanded them to do so. Yet they were buffeted by a dreadful tempest, and they seemed to be in danger of drowning. A storm - and Christ on board! It seems a contradiction. Wouldn't His presence ensure a peaceful journey? Not at all! Life frequently becomes more difficult after a person has accepted Christ as Savior and Lord. The Christian encounters the devil's opposition. But a storm - and Christ asleep! That even deepens the perplexity! Our Lord's silence, the frustrating delays, the mysteries of his dealings - these are too profound for us to understand. Yet we can be certain that His purpose in testing our faith is to strengthen it. God will surely fulfill his plan for us through our struggles, and His deliverance will lead us to praise Him.

Needless fears beset the disciples because they did not trust Jesus words. If they had just thought for a moment, they would have remembered that he had said, "Let us pass over unto the other side." He didn't say, "Let us go to the middle of the lake and be drowned." They should have been saying to the raging waves, "You can do us no harm, for Christ the mighty Savior is on board!" - Our Daily Bread

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**Mark 4:36 - Christian Ships** - It was a mountain preacher who followed a strange outline in his sermon on the text, "And there were also with him other little ships" (Mark 4:36). The main ship, he declared, is Lordship. If that ship leads, all the other ships will fall in line:

- Church membership
- Worship
- Stewardship
- Discipleship
- Fellowship (Vance Havner)

Mark 4:37-39 - CHRIST, POWER OF - In Mark's account of the stilling of the tempest we read, "there arose a great storm of wind" (Mark 4:37). The disciples aroused the Lord from His sleep and we read, "And he arose." (v. 39). We are in the greatest storm of

history, but He is master of the storm. When the storm arises, let us arise in His strength and bid the tempest subside. Like the disciples we panic, forgetting Who is in the boat with us! We are hearing aplenty about the storm these days, but little about the Saviour. "There arose a storm. . . and he arose."

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## Mark 4:39

Breton fishermen on the coast of France have a brief prayer that humbly acknowledges God's control of nature and life:

"God, Your sea is so great and my boat is so small."

In recognizing that the sea belongs to God, the fishermen see God as the only source of safety for their boats.

In calming the Sea of Galilee, Jesus taught the disciples not only about His power over nature but also about external and internal peace. The lesson about external peace was the easier of the two; He stopped the storm. Dealing with the storm inside the disciples was more difficult; fear had replaced the disciples' faith.

**Trust** and **tranquility** are twins in the spiritual life. Perfect peace comes from complete trust (Is 26:3). —D. J. De Haan

**Better the storm with Christ, than smooth waters without Him**

**Sometimes God calms the storm,  
sometimes He lets the storm rage and calms His child.**

## Mark 5

### Mark 5:11-13

**The Gadarene Swine Law:** Merely because the group is in formation does not mean that the group is on the right course. Source unknown

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**Mark 5:1-20 - The Gadarene** - Matthew 8:28-34 - AFTER mastering a wild sea the Lord Jesus masters a wild man. Three Gospels give us the story of the Gadarene demoniac (Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39), and it is unusual that Mark's account, usually the briefest, is here the longest. There are those who would make this man to be only an insane case, but our Lord clearly recognized demon-possession by His saying, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." That He was merely accepting the common view of His time is an argument too foolish to reserve room for refutation. Much has been said about the destruction of the swine who refused to endure what men put up with. Huxley made much of this "destruction of property" as an argument against the Lord. Our Lord never went at anything tamely. He made bold strokes and brushed everything else aside to get at a needy life. What are a few hogs compared to a human soul? The destruction of the swine was a bold evidence of the miracle and a daring declaration that lives are ever more important than property. If the owner of the hogs had accepted the Lord Jesus he would have had a treasure inestimable. Instead, he saw only temporal loss and gain, and because Jesus was hurting his business, he besought Him to leave. Men have followed that procedure through the ages. When Christ interferes with our personal gain we usually beseech Him to leave. There is a beautiful truth in the healed man's desire to go with the Lord and His disciples in the ship to other parts. Doubtless he wanted to get away from the scenes of his past, and it looked very inviting—this prospect of sojourning with the Lord in new fields, ever hearing His words and witnessing His miracles. But it was not so to be; he must stay in the old, unromantic spot and tell what the Lord had done for his soul (and what a witness he must have been!). Many of us have known this experience. We have longed to follow the Lord across the sea or into some more interesting field, but He has commissioned us to stay at home—live down an evil past, perhaps—and be an obscure and unknown witness. It is not given to everyone to go far afield; there must be the disciple who stays at home. Time and time again we meet with those who went to foreign fields or undertook vast enterprises under mistaken leadings. It is so easy to confuse our wants with God's leadings. The work of the gospel is too often made the springboard from which to dive off into water too deep for us. This man obeyed the Lord's command, and as he proclaimed his story men marveled, according to Mark's account. Together with a marvelous experience of deliverance he had an obedient spirit, and that makes a great combination. Are you willing that Christ should do His wonders in your life at any cost to property and circumstances? Then you need to be willing to let Him station you where He will, to be His witness. (Vance Havner)

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### Mark 5:18 - The Disciple Who Stayed At Home

THE Gadarene demoniac, now clothed and in his right mind, begs to go along with Jesus (Mark 5:18). It must have looked romantic and alluring, the Lord and His disciples boarding the ship to cross over the little sea to new places and more adventures. The new disciple wanted to get away from old familiar territory, the scene of his horrible past, and begin anew elsewhere. How interesting to go here and there with this wonderful band and testify in strange places! Above all, he wanted to spend his life with the One Who had saved him from such a living terror and had made him a new creature. What disciple would not beg to get away from Gadara and go along with Jesus!

But it is not to be. Instead, Jesus bids him, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (v. 19). It is not a very glamorous commission and it might have disappointed some souls. "Go back to the old familiar and unromantic grounds where you have been such a hideous character and live down that past, overcome it by your new testimony. Don't run away from Gadara, stay right there and live for Me as earnestly as once you did for the devil. It will be hard, for everybody knows what you have been: they will call you names, and some will be slow to believe you, and others will call you a freak, but there is your mission field, you must be My disciple who stayed at home."

Do you grow weary of Gadara and long to break away to more alluring adventures across the sea? It is a glorious thing to follow the Christ to far lands and strange places. But I am thinking that sometimes it is even nobler to give up fond dreams of high endeavour in more romantic climes and go back home to live down a black past, proclaiming in dull and difficult circumstances what God has done for one's soul. All of us are smitten with that urge to cross over to better places: "If only I were yonder, how I could preach!" But only a few ever go, and sometimes it is not so romantic on the other side when they get there. Most of us cannot take passage for exciting service beyond the sea. We shall have to stay in Gadara and testify at home.

Of course, the Gadarene wanted most just to be with Jesus. What a beautiful evidence of a new affection that he does not want the Saviour even to get out of sight! But more blessed are they who see not, yet believe. Greater it is to labour on in Decapolis, walking by faith and not by sight, than to walk in His bodily presence three years like Peter or Judas, then deny or betray Him! Do not give much importance to fine experiences of sense and feeling: better be instant in season and out, feel like it or not.

"There is Preacher Blank. I wonder why he stuck to those country churches in the mountains. He was pretty rough back in other days when he grew up in that community. Then he was saved and went off to school. Nobody thought he would ever come back to that country, for he was smart and able, and we thought he would land in a city pulpit. But he turned down several chances and stayed in the backwoods, built up churches, lived down the past and turned many to righteousness."

Haven't you heard that once in a while? We have an idea that such Preacher Blanks maybe knew a day when they cast a long, eager look toward the sea, toward far lands and distant horizons. But the ship pulled away without them, while they turned back to commonplace sights in familiar old Gadara. For it is not given to all men to go with the ship to fields of fine romance. There must be the disciple who stayed at home to tell his friends what the Lord had done for his soul. (Vance Havner)

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## Mark 5:19

"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you" (Mark 5:19).

Many Christians, enthusiastic about foreign missions, answer the call to service. By going to foreign countries, praying faithfully, or giving financial support they help reach the lost in faraway lands. Yet some who have a great burden for people in spiritual darkness across the sea seem oblivious to the same need in their neighbors across the street.

A young woman, excited about her salvation, wanted to share the gospel with others, so she asked her pastor where she might go to serve most effectively. He told her to come back the next day and he would have an answer ready for her. When she returned to his office at the specified time, the pastor handed her a folded slip of paper. "I'm suggesting someone who needs you right now more than anyone else in all the world," he said. The young woman quickly left the pastor's study, eager to read where her mission field might be. When she opened the note, she saw that the pastor had written two words: "Your father." She had been so enthusiastic about reaching the lost in distant lands that she had neglected someone close to home. Convicted of her negligence, she acted on the pastor's advice. She visited her dad regularly, ministered to his physical needs, showered her love upon him, and witnessed to him.

Serving the Lord on some remote mission field is challenging, and the tremendous sacrifices and hardships are praiseworthy. But, like charity, missions must always begin at home. —R. W De Haan. Our Daily Bread **There is no "home" or "foreign" in God's missionary vocabulary.**

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**Mark 5:20 - Tell It!** Read: Mark 5:1–20 | The man went away and began to tell . . . how much Jesus had done for him. Mark 5:20

The year was 1975 and something significant had just happened to me. I needed to find my friend Francis, with whom I shared a lot of personal matters, and tell him about it. I found him in his apartment hurriedly preparing to go out, but I slowed him down. The way he stared at me, he must have sensed that I had something important to tell him. "What is it?" he asked. So I told him simply, "Yesterday I surrendered my life to Jesus!"

Francis looked at me, sighed heavily, and said, "I've felt like doing the same for a long time now." He asked me to share what happened, and I told him how the previous day someone had explained the gospel to me and how I asked Jesus to come into my life. I still remember the tears in his eyes as he too prayed to receive Jesus's forgiveness. No longer in a hurry, he and I talked and talked about our new relationship with Christ.

Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story. Psalm 107:2

After Jesus healed the man with an evil spirit, He told him, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19). The man didn't need to preach a powerful sermon; he simply needed to share his story.

No matter what our conversion experience is, we can do what that man did: "[He] went away and began to tell . . . how much Jesus had done for him."

What has Jesus done for you? Tell it!

Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story. Psalm 107:2 By Lawrence Darmani

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**Mark 5:24** - When Jesus was on His way to the house of Jairus the multitude thronged Him but only one poor sick woman really touched Him (Mark 5:24-34). Multitudes throng the Lord at church on Sunday. How many really touch Him? (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 5:28 - Get Through to Jesus!** If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. Mark 5:28.

In the maze of present-day confusion, the chaos of conflicting voices, how often have we wished that we might just press through and touch Jesus as in the days of His flesh. They were not bewildered then by scholars and sectarians, each claiming the only perfect right to introduce anyone to Him. This poor sick woman came all by herself and for herself and it worked. Whether she had pure, unadulterated, unalloyed faith I know not, but she got through to Jesus!

Are you troubled and dizzy with a dozen voices shouting in your ears? Have you, like the father of the demonized boy, brought your problem to the disciples—this church or preacher—to find that "they could not"? Don't go away. Jesus is saying, "Bring your problem to me." Push through the crowd and touch Him for yourself. You need no middleman to present you. As many as touch Him are made whole. "Be whole of thy plague," He told the woman. Bring your plague to Him. Let no one stop you short of Him. "As many as touched him..." (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 5:21-43 - "Only Believe"** - THERE is much comfort for us in the healing of the woman with the issue of blood (Matt. 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56) which is so interwoven with the healing of Jairus' daughter that we give here the scripture including both. This poor woman had the double aggravation of being ill and having spent all on doctors in vain, a circumstance familiar to many of us. Doubtless her faith was rather crude and perhaps mixed with some superstition, but it was such faith as she had, and she used it. The Word does not stress the quality of it (except to say that a little will work wonders, Matt. 17:20) but the object of faith, and since Christ was the object here, the blessing followed—as it always does.

Our Lord called her back to make it clear that she had been healed through no magical virtue of His but because of her faith. "According to your faith be it unto you," He declared long ago, but still we do not believe it; we try roundabout methods to secure what comes only by believing.

This was made clear in this same passage in the case of Jairus. He had summoned Jesus to help his daughter who was at the point of death. While our Lord dealt with the woman, someone came from Jairus' house saying, "Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?" Ah, that is always the attitude of this poor world. "My case is hopeless; why pray?" But our Lord answered, "Be not afraid, only believe." Would that we could hear Him today in the moment when all seems lost, when fondest hopes have perished, when dearest ones lie dead, saying still as still He does, "Be not afraid, only believe." No matter what your circumstance, keep your confidence in Him and He will do what is for the best. There come so many times when, through the voice of others, the evil one says, "What is the use in calling on the Lord? It is a dead prospect; why trouble Him any further?" But there never was a situation in which faith is not the victory. He may not raise our dead as He did then, but He will raise them one day; and there is no occasion to be afraid, for we know that all things work together for good to them who are His.

So He went on into this "impossible" situation, and when He declared the maid not dead but only asleep, they laughed Him to scorn. Still the world laughs at Him as He moves among our "impossible" situations, our sorrows and broken hopes. "What good does it to trust in Jesus? What can He do for you?" But every day those who trust Him know that He still works His wonders if we only believe. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 5:24-34- Seeking** - When Jesus was on His way to the house of Jairus the multitude thronged Him but only one poor sick woman really touched Him (Mark 5:24-34) . Multitudes throng the Lord at church on Sunday. How many really touch Him? (Vance

**Mark 5:26 - The Power of the Word of God** - I (Robert J Morgan, Donelson Fellowship) read just this week about a man in Huntsville, Alabama who was imprisoned as a member of the Mexican Mafia. His name is Mauricio Cardenas, and he was co-founder of the Texas chapter of the Mexican Mafia. One day in his prison cell a newspaper arrived, and on the front page somehow there was a quotation from the Bible, from Mark 5:26, about the story of the woman whom Jesus healed. Somehow that verse grabbed his heart and mind, and by the end of the day he had prayed to receive Jesus as His Lord and Savior. But he feared letting his fellow gang members know about his conversion, because there was a policy that no one ever left the mafia except by death. It was a policy known as "Blood in, Blood out." So he kept his conversion secret, but finally he couldn't keep quiet anymore. He went to the recreation yard where there were about forty members of the gang and he told them in plain simple Spanish, "I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior, and I am backing out of the Eme (Mafia). I've thought it over long and hard and know the consequences of this action. You guys do what you have to do. It was an honor to have served as your leader. Now, it is an honor to serve Christ." No one said a thing, but as the months passed no one hurt him. In fact others joined him, sparking a prison revival that so far has yielded 97 professions of faith and 10 baptisms. ("[Former Mexican Mafia General Baptized in Texas Prison](#)," by John Hall in Texas Baptist Communications December 5, 2006.)

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**Mark 5:31 - Not Lost in the Crowd** - Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? (Mark 5:31). God never loses the individual in the crowd. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"—there is the multitude—but God breaks it down into individuals—"there is none righteous, no, not one." Sinners cannot hide in the crowd.

But there is another side: "God so loved the world"—there is the multitude—"that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever"—there is the individual—"believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Salvation is for every sinner in the crowd.

1. The disciples saw the crowd; Jesus saw one lone woman. The multitude thronged Him: the woman touched Him.

2. The crowds at church on Sunday morning throng Him, but few ever touch Him. God deals with people one at a time.

Be sure you press through the throng and touch Him. "For as many as touched [not thronged] Him were made perfectly whole." (Vance Havner)

TOUCHERS NOT THRONGERS Thou seest... sayest thou, who touched me? Mark 5:31. Our lord saw the crowd, but what concerned Him most was the woman who touched Him. Crowds at church on Sunday may be impressive, but more important are not the throngers but the touchers. He is looking for that desperate soul who gets through the pressing multitude and makes contact. She did not look very important, dying with a terminal illness, penniless, health gone, money gone, but faith not gone. Our Lord asked for a public confession, a testimony "before all the people." What is needed most today is not a multitude of throngers but touchers who witness to the miracle of His power. (Vance Havner)

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## Mark 5:35

Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

What hopelessness! They had watched the sweet flower fade, till no color was left on the pale cheek, and the merry voice was still; and then they thought of the Galilean Teacher: "Why cost thin time and trouble? his visit will be useless now! It was very kind of Him to be willing to come! But it is now of no use! Very kind; but no use."

We go to God in comparatively small trials, and think He can help us. But there are times when we say: It is no use troubling farther; we must just bear our trial as well as we can, God Himself cannot help us. Can he give back that twin-soul? Can He restore the love that has died out? Can He nude this unhappy marriage? Can He deliver from that life-long paralysis? Life is extinct; hope is dead; the light has dipped below the horizon. It is no use to trouble God or man. We have no alternative but to suffer till eternity explain the mysteries of time.

But Jesus knows the way out. He says in his sweet undertone, "Fear not! only believe." He has the keys of death. He never would have let things come to this awful pass by his delay unless He had known that, even if the worse came to the worst, all would end well. He has purposely delayed till this, that He might have the better opportunity of showing you what God can do. Fear not! the hand of the Almighty Savior has yours within its grasp. He will not let you stumble as you go down this dark staircase by his side. Only believe: have faith in Him. All may seem very mysterious now, but you will come to see that it was the wisest and best after all. You shall yet clasp to your heart the lost one, arrayed in resurrection beauty. - Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 5:35 - Look Who's Here!** - Jesus was in the house of Jairus in answer to a hurried call to heal a sick daughter. On the way over He had been detained for a few moments when a very sick woman pressed through the crowd to touch the hem of His garment. It reminds us of how, when a similar urgent call came from Mary and Martha at Bethany, our Lord did not hurry but abided



two more days where He was. He let both the sick daughter and Lazarus die and then arrived to raise them from the dead. He could afford to take His time!

Before He arrived someone from the house of Jairus met the ruler and said, "... Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?" (Mark 5:35). It was too late by ordinary reckoning but it is never too late when Jesus is on His way! In the house He said to the mourners, "Weep not; she is not dead but sleepeth." (See verse 39.) He had said that about Lazarus. To Him death was and is but a sleep and that does not mean spiritual unconsciousness. Even in natural sleep we dream.

Luke tells us that when Jesus said this, they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. To them she was dead and that was the end of everything. That is as far as atheism, agnosticism, infidelity, and unbelief ever get. Everything is just cause and effect—cold natural law—and when you're dead you're dead. The scoffers of the last days, Peter tells us, laugh at the prospect of Christ's return and they use the same old argument, "... all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4). But Jesus Christ is Lord of all and He operates on both sides of death, here and hereafter. "Knowing that she was dead" is not the end of the matter.

Bearers of sad news, as in this account, often tell the Christian who has called on Jesus in the hour of desperation, "It's no use. Why bother the Lord?" Death is never the last word for a Christian for there is always the resurrection. And in many another emergency when the situation looks hopeless the scoffers again and again have laughed too soon. When Jesus Christ is in the room, all the conclusions of mortal men fall short. At Jacob's well the Samaritan woman said, "Thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep." (See John 4:11.) That was correct but it did not cover the issue. The disciples on the way to Emmaus lamented that it was now the third day since the crucifixion. That was correct but Jesus was walking with them when they said it! Martha affirmed her belief that Lazarus would rise in the resurrection but before her stood the Resurrection and the Life! When Jesus ordered that the stone be rolled away from the sepulcher, this same Martha objected that it would not be advisable since Lazarus had been dead four days! One is tempted to cry, "So what!" When Jesus Christ is on the scene all other calculations must be reevaluated. Even in the presence of death He makes a difference!

"Knowing that she was dead." "The well is deep." "It has been three days since Calvary." "Lazarus has been dead four days." So what! What difference does all that and everything else make if Jesus Christ is here!

He promised to attend every meeting where even two or three gather in His name. I wonder what would happen if some droll Wednesday night prayer meeting ever took Him seriously! It might not break up before morning if we could forget all the "yes, buts." Most of our meetings add up to, "We know you're here, Lord... BUT...."

It's about time we met all these wise objections, reservations, and qualifications with one big hearty So what! Look who's here! (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 5:35 - Why Trouble the Master?**

Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? Mark 5:35.

"The little girl is dead. It is too late now. Why bother the Master and take up His time?"

Have you come to a place where the case seems hopeless, where the prospect is "dead"? That loved one for whom you have prayed so long seems in direr straits than ever. The hope long deferred now seems impossible.

But Jesus had no funerals. And when the world says the issue is as dead as a corpse, remember that Jesus can break up funerals. We are so prone to give up and attend the interment of our hopes when God would raise the dead.

Jesus said to the ruler, "Be not afraid, only believe." And so He says to you. When ordinary logic, when undiscerning friends say, "It is too late," be not afraid to "trouble the Master." (Vance Havner)

Only believe....

All things are possible,

Only believe!

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### **Mark 5:39** Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.

I recently conducted the funeral of a little girl. During the service, the guests had trouble hearing because of the mother's wailing: "I don't want her to die.... Just let me hold her!... I miss her so much...." Asking the Lord for guidance, I rose and said, "Jesus once attended the funeral of a little girl, and He spoke the most astounding words. He said, "What is all this commotion and wailing?"

I had everyone's attention, for my words had such direct bearing. Even the mother stopped her sobbing long enough to look up. I continued, "The Bible says that while it's all right to sorrow, Christians ought not to grieve like others who have no hope."

I went on to speak from 2 Kings 4:26 about the death of the Shunammite's son, and of the mother's words in that passage, "It is well with the child." I discussed God's mercy, the healing and hope the little girl instantly experienced in heaven, how happy she was, and I talked about the coming resurrection and reunion.

After the service, the mother approached the open coffin for the last time, but there was a glow on her face. "Thank you for what you said," she whispered. "I see things so differently now."

Too much weeping and wailing can betray a lack of trust in our Lord. His presence and promises compose our hearts and bring

morning out of mourning.

When I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies,  
I bid farewell to every fear, and wipe my weeping eyes.

—Isaac Watts

([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

## Mark 6

### Mark 6:3 - THE CARPENTER Is not this the carpenter...? Mark 6:3.

With only thirty-three years to spend on earth, my Lord spent thirty of them, the hidden years at Nazareth, preparing for three years of public ministry; He did not visit world capitals in a spectacular career. How different would His life have been if it had been planned by a manager and a public relations expert! For the first thirty years, the Carpenter glorified the ordinary. The Christian life is not a hectic round of sensational mountaintop experiences. It is living by the Spirit in the will of God day by day in home and shop, plying the daily task with busier feet because the secret soul a holier strain repeats. (Vance Havner)

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### Mark 6:14-29

**KIND DISAPPROVAL** - Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.--Ephesians 5:11

How should we as Christians relate to people who are living contrary to biblical standards?

I faced this question recently in a shopping mall when I met two people who had left their mates and children and were living together without getting married. They were friendly, and I greeted them politely. I did not berate them, but neither did I imply that I approved of what they had done and were doing.

On another occasion a father told me that his son had declared himself to be a practicing homosexual. "I know you are a preacher," said the father, "but I hope you are enlightened enough to understand." I told him that I didn't despise his son or feel any ill-will, but that God says such conduct is sinful.

John the Baptist told King Herod that he had no right to have Herodias as his wife, because she had divorced her husband to marry him (Mark 6:17, 18). Although the Bible doesn't tell us John's manner, I think he was respectful but firm. If his rebuke had unduly antagonized Herod, the king would not have continued to respect and listen to John.

Let's be kind toward those who live in sin, but let's always make it clear that God hates sin, and that there are serious consequences for those who don't repent. H V Lugt. Our Daily Bread.

The sad world with all its repining,  
Its bitterness, care, and tears,  
Needs the wealth of your lovingkindness  
To sweeten the sin-soiled years.--Hall  
**True kindness warns and rescues.**

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### Mark 6:30

They told Him all things, whatsoever they had done, and taught.(r.v.)

Talking things over with Jesus! It is a precious secret! When one has been out in the world, it is delightful to talk over what has happened in the seclusion of the home. We have read of a wife who reserved one room in the house, which no one was permitted to enter but her husband and herself; and there they interchanged their mutual confidences. So it is a blessed habit to talk over everything with Jesus, and to review the events of the past beneath the light of his loving eyes.

"We have had much success, Master," "we cry; the cities were moved; the devils were subject; the crowds followed us everywhere." Ah, children, He seems to say, Those who cry "Hosanna" today will cry "Crucify" tomorrow: the real work of God is not done amid congratulating crowds, but in the heart's depths, and in the ante-chamber. See that ye dwell not on the excitement of the outward reception, lest you attribute vent success to something in yourselves, and pride yourselves upon it, and become unsuitable for my

use. All success comes from above.

“We have been greatly persecuted, and our mission seems to have been a failure, Master,” we cry at another time. “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” Care not for it, the same wise Counsellor replies: I at least am satisfied; I will see to it that your reward is according to your faithfulness, if not to your success; and there shall be a remnant of good soil that shall repay one hundredfold.

Thus his loving words extract the poison from success, and rally us from despondency. Oh, Christian workers, get into the secret of his presence, that He may correct, criticize, or encourage, as He please.

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 6:31 - Human Race** - Read: Mark 6:7–13, 30–32 | [Jesus] said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” Mark 6:31

The alarm clock goes off. Too early, it seems. But you have a long day ahead. You have work to do, appointments to keep, people to care for, or all this and more. Well, you are not alone. Each day, many of us rush from one matter to another. As someone has wittily suggested, “That’s why we are called the human race.”

When the apostles returned from their first mission trip, they had a lot to report. But Mark did not record Jesus’s evaluation of the disciples’ work; rather, he focused on His concern that they rest awhile. Jesus said, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mk 6:31).

Lord, I thank You today for all You have given me to do.

Ultimately, we find true rest through recognizing the presence of God and trusting Him. While we take our responsibilities seriously, we also recognize that we can relax our grip on our work and careers, our families and ministry, and give them over to God in faith. We can take time each day to tune out the distractions, put away the tense restlessness, and reflect in gratitude on the wonder of God’s love and faithfulness.

So feel free to stop and take a breath. Get some real rest.

Lord, I thank You today for all You have given me to do. Help me to truly rest in You—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

We do not rest because our work is done; we rest because God commanded it and created us to have a need for it. Gordon MacDonald

INSIGHT: When Jesus asked His disciples to go to a quiet place and rest (Mark 6:31), He was telling them to do something that He had often done with them. Jesus had withdrawn with His disciples to the lake (Mk 2:13; 3:7) or up on the mountain (Mk 3:13). Jesus was also in the habit of withdrawing from the crowds to a solitary place to rest and to spend time talking with His Father (Matt. 14:13,23; 26:36; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 4:42; 6:12; John 6:15). The gospel of Luke tells us, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Mk 5:16). By Poh Fang Chia

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- [Quiet Time: 7 Minutes With God](#)
  - [Thoughts on the Quiet Time](#)
  - [In His Presence: Spending Time With God](#)
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## Mark 6:31

(See also following illustrations to Mk 6:31)

THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT - "Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."—Mark 6:31.

THERE IS something in our blood which cries out at certain times for rest and change. We may love our home, our work, and chance of doing our share in the toil of this work-a-day world, but when the summer comes we long to escape from the crowded city, the arduous toil, and pine for respite and rest. The love of Nature is a sacred heritage from the love of God, and it is His voice that calls to us: "Come, My children, Be glad with Me, breath the scented air which I have flavoured in its passage through clover-fields, gorse, and heather; rejoice in the woods and flowers, golden sunsets and purple mountains; the glory of the ocean and the sea-shore."

But we must be unselfish, if we would really enjoy our holiday. It is difficult to resist the temptation to obtain the best possible return for our money, and a little over, even at the expense of others. Always think of some one else--the short Zacchaeus who cannot see over your shoulder! The child who loves to look out of the carriage window; the invalid who cannot stand the draught! the tired mother with the restless children! Look out for daily opportunities for showing the gentleness, sweetness, and unselfishness of the Lord Jesus.

Make time to be alone sometimes. It is a mistake always to be in the presence of another. The soul must be still and quiet. There are accents in the voice of God so deep and still, that the breathing of a companion may make them inaudible. But it is delightful to have a choice friend and companion with whom you can hold sweet fellowship, and "there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." He will draw near and walk with you, and as He talks with you by the way, your hearts will bum within you.

Remember those who are in poverty, in sickness, and in need, and amidst your own gladness and joy, send a portion unto them for whom nothing is prepared (Neh 8:10, 11, 12).

PRAYER - What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?I will praise, and bless, and give thee Thanks, all the days of my life. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power. AMEN - F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

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## Mark 6:31

**GETTING AWAY** - "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." - Mark 6:31

I'm not writing this article from my usual office location. Most of the time when I talk to you through the pages of Our Daily Bread, I'm hidden behind the walls of my office, routinely going about another workday.

Today, though, I've decided to get away from all that. I've taken my computer to a campground where I can hear birds singing and feel a warm breeze. It's amazing how the change makes it easier to read the Bible and pray.

It wasn't my idea. My daughter Julie needed a getaway day -- far from the rigors of school and the pressures of junior-high life. So she brought her bike and I tagged along. While she is rejuvenating by the lake, I am finding how mind-clearing it is to escape into the quiet.

Of course, the idea of getting away is not original with Julie. Jesus did it too. He took time to escape. He went to the desert to rest and think about the death of John the Baptist, and He went to the mountain to pray (Mk. 6:14-31,46).

When God speaks, we listen more attentively, it seems, if there are fewer distractions. That's why it's good to carve out some time to get away. Even if the retreat is a city park or a booth at a restaurant, take time to escape. Then talk with God and let Him lift your spirit. -- J. David Branon, Our Daily Bread.

Alone with God, the world forbidden,

Alone with God, O blest retreat!

Alone with God, and in Him hidden,

To hold with Him communion sweet.

**Those who wait on the Lord renew their strength.**

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## Mark 6:31

According to tradition, when the apostle John was overseer in Ephesus, his hobby was raising pigeons. It is said that on one occasion another elder passed his house as he returned from hunting and saw John playing with one of his birds. The man gently chided him for spending his time so frivolously. John looked at the hunter's bow and remarked that the string was loose.

"Yes," said the elder, "I always loosen the string of my bow when it's not in use. If it stayed tight, it would lose its resilience and fail me in the hunt."

John responded, "And I am now relaxing the bow of my mind so that I may be better able to shoot the arrows of divine truth."

We cannot do our best work with nerves taut or frayed from being constantly under pressure. When Jesus' disciples returned from a strenuous preaching mission, their Master recognized their need for rest and invited them to come with Him to a quiet place where they could be refreshed. Jesus invites you too. —D. J. De Haan. Our Daily Bread

**If we are to function our best,  
time is needed to rest.**

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## **Mark 6:31**

**Aesop Riddle** - According to a Greek legend, in ancient Athens a man noticed the great storyteller Aesop playing childish games with some little boys. He laughed and jeered at Aesop, asking him why he wasted his time in such frivolous activity. Aesop responded by picking up a bow, loosening its string, and placing it on the ground. Then he said to the critical Athenian, "Now, answer the riddle, if you can. Tell us what the unstrung bow implies." The man looked at it for several moments but had no idea what point Aesop was trying to make. Aesop explained, "If you keep a bow always bent, it will break eventually; but if you let it go slack, it will be more fit for use when you want it." - Our Daily Bread, June 6, 1992

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**Mark 6:31 - "Come Ye Apart"** - "Come ye yourselves apart... and rest a while." Mark 6:31 If you don't come apart, you will come apart—you'll go to pieces! Some of us would do more for the Lord if we did less. We have gone in for quantity production but the quality suffers. Keeping everlastingly at it brings only high blood pressure. Our Lord did not undertake to do personal work with everybody or to heal everyone in Galilee. Elijah must hide himself (1 Kings 17:3) before he could show himself with power (1Ki 18:1). We do not hide ourselves nowadays and when we go out to show ourselves, all that we do show is ourselves; the Spirit of God works not in us. The Lord Jesus knew how to rest for God—a forgotten art. Many a Christian would best glorify his Lord by a fishing trip. Maybe fishing in the creek would improve our fishing for men. We can get closer to people by getting away from them for awhile. Martha gets overwrought in the kitchen and needs to turn to Mary and sit awhile at the feet of the Lord. So much church work is like a squirrel in a circular cage, plenty of activity but no progress. Statistcitis is developed with symptoms not unlike St. Vitus' dance. There is plenty of speed in Isaiah 40:31: We shall fly, run, walk; but it follows "waiting upon the Lord." "Study to be quiet"! (1 Thess. 4:11) (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 6:31 - Rest** "Come ye yourselves apart...and rest a while" (Mark 6:31) is a must for every Christian. If you don't come apart, you will come apart—you'll go to pieces! I have no sympathy with those who say the devil never takes a vacation. I am not following the devil but the Lord, who said, "Come ye yourselves apart...and rest a while." If we cannot go away for a vacation, we can take an "inside vacation" and find grace to help in time of need. God gives more rest than time will allow! Some of us would do more for the Lord if we did less. The Christian in particular and the Church in general both need to stop chopping wood long enough to whet the blade. Hours out for the Word and prayer and a week out from regular church work to revive the saints is a wise investment. The psalmist wrote, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 91:1). We cannot rest in God until we nest in God. To nest is to settle, to abide. "Our eyes are upon thee." We know not what to do, but He knows. No sleeping pill can rest a man like knowing that! The Lord Jesus knew how to rest for God, a forgotten art. Many a Christian would best glorify his Lord by a fishing trip. Maybe fishing in the creek would improve our fishing for men. We can get closer to people by getting away from them for awhile. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 6:31 - Self-Care** - Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. Mark 6:31

After my husband underwent emergency heart surgery, I spent an anxious night by his hospital bed. Mid-morning, I remembered a scheduled haircut. "I'll have to cancel," I said, raking my fingers distractedly through my straggly hair.

"Mom, just wash your face and go to your appointment," my daughter said.

Sometimes self-care means allowing others to help carry our burdens.

"No, no," I insisted. "It doesn't matter. I need to be here."

"I'll stay," Rosie said. "Self-care, Mom. . . . Self-care. You're of more use to Dad if you take care of yourself."

Moses was wearing himself out serving alone as judge over the Israelites. Jethro cautioned his son-in-law Moses: "You will only wear [yourself] out. The work is too heavy . . . you cannot handle it alone" (Ex. 18:18). He then explained ways that Moses could delegate his work and share his heavy load with others.

Though it may seem paradoxical for the Christian, self-care is essential for a healthy life (Matt. 22:37-39; Eph. 5:29-30). Yes, we must love God first and love others as well, but we also need to get adequate rest to renew our body and spirit. Sometimes self-care means stepping away and graciously allowing others to help us with our burdens.

Jesus often slipped away to rest and pray (Mark 6:30-32). When we follow His example, we will be more effective in our relationships and better able to give care to others.

Dear Lord, refresh my spirit today. Help me to bring balance to my life as I juggle my responsibilities. Thank You for Your love and care.

Don't try to do everything—take time to refresh your body and spirit.

**INSIGHT:** It is hard to imagine the complexity and variety of tasks Moses faced as he led the Hebrew slaves to freedom. The Israelites had been gone from Egypt less than three months (see Ex. 19:1) when the load was already too great for one person to bear. This prompted Jethro's wise counsel that Moses share the load with others. By [Cindy Hess Kasper](#)

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**Mark 6:34 - Compassion** - Mark 6:34 And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

The difference between Christianity and paganism is well illustrated in the actions of one religious sect in India that hires people to pick up unwanted or dying insects! They are then fed and cared for. This is in a country where people starve to death on the streets every night! Christianity teaches that all that exists was created for the use of people. Their needs must concern us, not the needs of insects.

In the fishing villages along the coast of France are many little chapels. Most of them display plaques with this phrase inscribed on them: "To the Castaways." The plaques list the names of sailors lost at sea, or perhaps the names of others saved from shipwreck who have built a memorial to their deliverance. Every church ought to be dedicated to the castaways; the spiritual castaways, the social castaways, the economic castaways.

A few years ago the Associated Press carried the story of a dramatic rescue in Allentown, Pennsylvania. An eight-year-old boy had fallen into a creek and been sucked into a large drainpipe. His whole body was submerged in the pipe and he was in danger of drowning. His twelve-year-old playmate extended his hand. Though the playmate could not get him out, he held the boy safely until help came and he was rescued. The church may be thought of as the extended arm of Christ to a world badly needing to be rescued.

Pictures we take sometimes disappoint us. The eye edits out things that the camera leaves in—poles and wires and trees and traffic. So compassion edits out some of the bad we see in others so that we may focus on the good.

(Preceding illustrations from [1000 Windows - Illustrations- Robert Shannon](#))

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## **Mark 6:34**

Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them (Mark 6:34).

At times, the world seems to be an uncaring, unsympathetic place. People are often cruel and indifferent, not giving a second thought to the plight of their suffering neighbors. Wrapped up in their own interests, they don't seem to notice the anguish and despair that is at their doorstep.

This could not be said of the Lord Jesus. Time after time He met the needs of suffering people. Luke 7 tells about Christ's compassion when He saw the widow stricken with grief over the death of her son. Jesus had compassion on her and healed the boy. Earlier, when He saw a man with leprosy—who was despised, ostracized, and no doubt terribly disfigured—He made him well (Luke 5:12, 13, 14, 15). Still today, Jesus looks upon human need with compassion.

A little girl whose mother had been taken to the hospital was spending the night alone with her father for the first time. Soon after her father turned out the lights, the girl asked quietly, "Daddy, are you there?" "Yes," he assured her. A moment later she asked, "Daddy, are you looking at me?" When he said yes, she fell asleep.

Likewise, every child of God can depend on the Savior's look of love. No matter how painful the problem or how deep the sorrow, we know He has His eyes fixed on us. And knowing that our Savior's compassionate gaze always watches over us should make us loving, caring people. Although the world may turn its eyes from suffering, the Christian, following the example of our Savior, should be alert to sorrow and quick to respond. —D. C. Egner. Our Daily Bread

**God loves every one of us  
as if there were but one of us to love.**

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## **Mark 6:45**



**Confident Hindu** - You may remember Rao, the Hindu holy man who flirted with fame in 1966. The old mystic believed he could walk on water. He was so confident in his own spiritual power that he announced he would perform the feat before a live audience. He sold tickets at \$100 apiece. Bombay's elite turned out en masse to behold the spectacle. The event was held in a large garden with a deep pool. A crowd of more than 600 had assembled. The white-bearded yogi appeared in flowing robes and stepped confidently to the edge of the pool. He paused to pray silently. A reverent hush fell on the crowd. Rao opened his eyes, looked heavenward, and boldly stepped forward. With an awkward splash he disappeared beneath the water. Sputtering and red-faced, the holy man struggled to pull himself out of the water. Trembling with rage, he shook his finger at the silent, embarrassed crowd. "One of you," Rao bellowed indignantly, "is an unbeliever!" - John MacArthur, in *Tabletalk*, April, 1990, p. 10

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**Mark 6:48 - "He Would Have Passed By"** He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. Mark 6:48.

With the Emmaus disciples, "he made as though he would have gone further." Here He walks the waves, while the amazed disciples suppose they have seen a spirit. He assures them, "It is I."

Joseph and Mary supposed He was with them when He was not. Here others supposed He was not with them when He was. Mary in the garden supposed Him to be the gardener. No wonder the old Negro maid said, "I never spouses. Dem spouses will get you into trouble."

When the storm rages, He is there. But He will pass by if you do not avail yourself of His presence. "He would have passed by them.... He made as though he would have gone further." Call upon Him. "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour: do not pass me by."

He came to them in their distress, but He did not come into the boat until they called. He did not go into the Emmaus home until they constrained Him. He will not intrude. There is a point beyond which He will not go. If we do not invite Him in, He will go on. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 6:45-52** When they saw Him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; for they all saw Him and were terrified. Immediately He spoke with them and said, "Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

At three o'clock in the morning, the disciples, straining at their oars, could not see Jesus, who was praying on the hillside; but He saw them. Wending down the mountain, He spread an invisible carpet-runner across the waves, and by sunrise, all was well.

The faith that pleases Jesus is the faith that adopts a sunrise attitude amidst a midnight storm. The Lord is pleased with a faith-attitude that knows in the darkness that Jesus is on His way.

Exhausted and frightened, they battled the rain,  
The wind, the waves, enduring the strain,  
Till finally their nerves could stand it no more;  
And their strength was all gone,  
And their muscles were sore.

But up on the mountain Jesus could see,  
Every white-capping wave on the rough Galilee.  
And treading the billows like a carpet of sod,  
He came to their aid  
With the power of God.

They worshipped Him then, with rejoicing and awe  
For the marvels He did, and the wonders they saw.  
But better to praise Him with the storm at its worst;  
By remembering His power  
And promises first.

[\(My All in All - Robert J Morgan\)](#)

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**Mark 6:50 - Sad or Glad?** For they all saw him, and were troubled. Mark 6:50. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. John 20:20.

The disciples saw Him in a storm but supposed Him to be a spirit. They did not recognize Him. But in our second verse they saw the risen Lord and knew Him by the print of the nails in His hands and feet.

Surely the sight of the Lord should make us glad. But sometimes we wist not that it is He. He draws near, but, like the Emmaus disciples, we have holden eyes. What should thrill us only troubles us. Indeed, as the Emmaus disciples related their experience, Jesus appeared, but they "supposed that they had seen a spirit." He quelled their fears then as He did in John's account by showing the marks of the cross.

We walk by faith, not by sight, these days, and are not granted a view of Him with our eyes. But in His dealings with us He still walks our seas and comes into our rooms through doors we have shut. Alas, that fear so often sees a spirit when faith should see the Saviour! What should bring triumph then brings only trouble. See Him and be glad! (Vance Havner)

## Mark 7

### Mark 7:14-23

From the Choice Gleanings Calendar comes this story: On one occasion Hudson Taylor wanted to teach a spiritual lesson, so he filled a glass with water and placed it on the table before him. While he was speaking, he pounded his fist hard enough to make the water splash onto the table. He then explained, "You will come up against much trouble. But when you do, remember only what's in you will spill out." - Our Daily Bread

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### Lip Service

This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. —Mark 7:6

Today's Scripture: Mark 7:5-15

Smile," said Jay as we drove to church. "You look so unhappy." I wasn't; I was just thinking, and I can't do two things at once. But to make him happy, I smiled. "Not like that," he said. "I mean a real smile."

His comment got me thinking even more intently. Is it reasonable to expect a real smile from someone who's being issued a command? A real smile comes from inside; it's an expression of the heart, not of the face.

We settle for phony smiles in photographs. We're happy when everyone cooperates at the photographer's studio and we get at least one picture with everyone smiling. After all, we're creating an icon of happiness, so it doesn't have to be genuine.

But phoniness before God is unacceptable. Whether we're happy or sad or mad, honesty is essential. God doesn't want false expressions of worship any more than He wants false statements about people or circumstances (Mark 7:6).

Changing our facial expression is easier than changing our attitude, but true worship requires that all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength agree that God is worthy of praise. Even when our circumstances are sad, we can be grateful for God's mercy and compassion, which are worth more than the "lip service" of a phony smile. By: Julie Ackerman Link

What a God we have to worship! What a Son we have to praise! What a future lies before us— Everlasting, love-filled days! — Maynard

A song in the heart puts a smile on the face.

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### Loopholes

Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. —Psalm 119:11

Today's Scripture: Mark 7:1-13

Five-year-old Jenna was not having a good start to her day. Every attempt to arrange the world according to her liking was having the opposite result. Arguing didn't work. Pouting didn't work. Crying didn't work. Finally her mother reminded her of the Bible verse she had been learning: "Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Ps. 119:11).

Apparently Jenna had been thinking about this verse, because she was quick to answer: "But Mom, it doesn't say that I won't sin; it says that I might not sin."

Her words are all too familiar. I often hear similar arguments in my own mind. There's something very appealing about loopholes, and we look for them wherever there's a command we don't want to obey.

Jesus addressed this problem with religious leaders who thought they had found a loophole in their religious laws (Mark 7:1-13). Instead of honoring their parents with financial or material support, they dedicated all their possessions to God, thereby limiting their use. Although their disobedience was not blatant, Jesus said their behavior was unacceptable.

Whenever we start looking for loopholes, we stop being obedient. By: Julie Ackerman Link

Lord, help us to submit to You, To follow and obey, Instead of finding loopholes to Defend our sinful way. —Sper

Even though we make excuses for not obeying God, He still calls it disobedience.

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### The Country Of Old Age

If anyone does not provide for his own, . . . [he] is worse than an unbeliever. —1 Timothy 5:8

Today's Scripture:

Mark 7:1-13

In the book *Another Country*, author Mary Pipher met with people in their seventies, eighties, and nineties who were confronting many different life situations.

"I wanted . . . to understand the country of old age," Pipher writes. "We are not organized in a way that makes aging easy." The root problem, she observed, is that young and old have become segregated, to the detriment of both groups.

This social trend is not necessarily intentional. But many people do ignore and shirk their responsibilities for the elderly. In Jesus' day, the Pharisees found creative ways to avoid their family duties. **In Mark 7:9-13, Jesus rebuked their common practice of dedicating their material possessions to God (declaring them as Corban) rather than using their assets to provide for their parents.** Their tradition had violated the commandment to honor their father and their mother.

Our children, work, and church activities can pull us in many directions. But that doesn't excuse us from honoring our aging parents by making provision for their needs, as much as we are able (1 Tim. 5:8). When the time comes for us to enter the country of old age, let's hope we've set the right example for our own children to follow. By: Dennis Fisher

Providing for our parents' needs  
With loving words and selfless deeds  
Is what the Lord expects of those  
Who try to follow where He leads. —Sper

Honoring our parents is learned by example.

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### The Walking Purchase

You . . . have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. —Matthew 23:23

Today's Scripture: Mark 7:5-13

In colonial North America, William Penn had a reputation as a benevolent Quaker who dealt fairly with Native Americans. When he returned to England, his sons stayed behind. They did not share his integrity. Soon they contrived a scheme to cheat a Delaware tribe. The sons produced an old contract in which the Indians had agreed to sell a portion of land that a man could walk in 1½ days.

When the tribe consented to honor their ancestors' agreement, Penn's sons were delighted. They hired three of the fastest runners they could find. One of the men covered a distance of 65 miles in 18 hours. They totally disregarded both the letter and the spirit of the agreement.

In Jesus' day, the scribes and Pharisees rationalized their violation of the spirit of God's law. Jesus exposed their hypocritical practice when He cited the commandment to "honor your father and your mother" (Mark 7:10-13). They were declaring a portion of their income as "a gift to God" to keep from using it to care for their aged parents.

The Bible is not a tool to get what we want. Instead, we must ask God to help us understand its intended purpose. Let's be sure we don't neglect the "weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith" (Matt. 23:23). By: Dennis Fisher

For Further Study

Want to get more out of reading the Bible?

Read How Can I Know God Through His Book?

Obeying the letter of the law is good; obeying the spirit of the law is better.

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## Inside Out

All these evil things come from within and defile a man. —Mark 7:23

Mark 7:14-23

During one of his sermons, Hudson Taylor, pioneer missionary to China, filled a glass with water and placed it on a table in front of him. While he was speaking, he pounded his fist hard enough to make the water splash onto the table. He then explained, “You will come up against much trouble. But when you do, remember, only what’s in you will spill out.”

That’s worth thinking about, isn’t it? When we are mistreated or misunderstood, how do we respond? With loving words, patience, and kindness? Or are we inclined to retaliate in anger?

In Ephesians 4:17-32, we see the contrast between what a person is before he is saved and what he is afterward. When we live under the control of the Holy Spirit, we will show it by the way we react to the jolting trials and temptations of life. How we respond to trying, embarrassing situations that are suddenly thrust upon us is a good test of how much we have grown in grace.

It is possible to suppress frustration and anger and to appear undisturbed. But if our heart is full of the Savior’s love, we will respond to the jostling of an unexpected trial with patience and kindness. Like a full glass of water, what’s inside of us will spill over on the outside. By: Richard DeHaan

Lord, help me flee all sin and shame,  
Lest I disgrace Your holy name;  
And may I live that all may see  
The Savior's love revealed in me. —DJD

When trouble grows, your character shows.

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## Inside Out

Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, . . . blasphemy, pride, foolishness. —Mark 7:21-22

Today's Scripture: Mark 7:9-23

Shopping for a melon is a tough assignment. No matter how good it looks, it’s hard to tell! So I tap it, thump it, and, if no one is looking, squeeze it—and then take it home, only to discover that it’s bad on the inside.

When the Pharisees were irritated that Jesus’ disciples did not wash their hands before eating—a violation of one of their traditions—Jesus immediately challenged them. “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition” (Mark 7:9). He even called them “hypocrites” and explained that what comes from the inside of a person is what “defiles” him, not the other way around.

If we’re not careful, we can become absorbed with looking good on the outside and forget what really counts. In fact, when we get to the place where we are keeping all the “right” rules, we may become proud of ourselves and judgmental toward others. But harboring bitterness, clinging to critical attitudes, and thinking too highly of ourselves are the kind of defiling stuff that make us guilty of Jesus’ charge of “hypocrite.”

So don’t miss the point. Remember, it’s the things on the inside—your heart, your thoughts, your attitudes—that really matter. By: Joe Stowell

More of Joe Stowell’s devotional material on hypocrisy is available on the Web. Check out “The Truth for Jesus’ Sake”

What matters to Jesus is what’s on the inside.

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## The One Who Could Not Be Hidden

He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. —Mark 7:24

Today's Scripture: Mark 7:24-30

Attar of Roses, a fragrant oil, is one of the most valuable products of Bulgaria and is heavily taxed for export. A tourist, unwilling to pay the duty, sought to evade customs by concealing two vials of the precious fluid in his suitcase. Apparently a little of the perfume

had spilled in his suitcase. By the time he reached the train station, the aroma was emanating from the luggage, declaring the presence of the hidden treasure. The authorities immediately knew what the man had done and confiscated the costly souvenirs.

The Lord Jesus could not be hidden either. Crowds were constantly mobbing Him to hear His words of wisdom, to benefit from His deeds of mercy, and to derive help from His loving compassion.

After He ascended to His Father, Jesus' influence continued in the lives of His disciples. The populace "realized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Their deportment and their attitude marked them as His true followers.

Are you living completely for Jesus? Is the love of Christ so obvious in your life that those who know you realize that you are a follower of the One who "could not be hidden"? (Mark 7:24). If so, the world will readily see that you are on God's side. Your influence cannot be hidden. By: Henry G. Bosch

When we've been alone with Jesus,  
Learning from Him day by day,  
Others soon will sense the difference  
As we walk along life's way. —Hess

You cannot hide your influence.

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## Mark 7:19

This He said, making all meats clean. (r.v.)

This is a remarkable rendering of the Revisers, which has the support of their profound scholarship; and inaugurates an era in the history of the Levitical institutions. Before this hour arrived men were clean if they ate certain kinds of food, and unclean if they ate others. But from this moment, the Evangelist tells us, these outward distinctions were abolished. Henceforth all meats were to be viewed by the followers of Jesus as equally clean. There is, however, need that we should remember two or three things in respect to food. (1) That every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it can be received with thanksgiving. The act of thanksgiving is the test for the fitness and unfitness of food, as the ancient sign was supposed to be when made by the knight over a glass of wine offered by a stranger. Do not touch what you cannot thank God for.

(2) Take care to eat for the need of the body rather than for its pleasure.—There are a great many dainties and luxuries heaped on our tables which we take simply for the pleasure of eating. It is here that we are assailed with temptation, and need to be on our guard. The fact of food being pleasant eating is not in itself sufficient to justify our taking it. It may clog our digestion, and impair our power for thought and prayer and service.

(3) Be moderate in the amount you eat.—Quite as many over-eat as over-drink. We should always have the girded loin. The majority of the diseases of modern life have been traced to the habit of eating to excess. We are told by eminent authorities that we ought not to rise from table with the sense of having eaten to the full. Let your moderation in this also be known to all men.

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 7:24-30 - "As Thou Wilt"** - Matthew 15:21-28 - JESUS' ministry in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon is marked by the wonderful story of the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). He had not planned a public ministry in these parts, but Mark tells us "He could not be hid." Neither can a true Christian be hidden; men will find him out.

This woman, outside the pale of His ministry to Israel, besought Him for her demonized daughter, but we read, "He answered her not a word." Prayer often meets such a Divine silence, but few of us press on to an answer as did this needy soul. Too often we take silence to mean refusal.

The disciples, bothered by her begging, asked our Lord to respond and send her away. These poor men were continually trying to handle the cases that came to Jesus, but not in His way. He answers, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," which indicates that they had meant for Him to grant her request to get rid of her. It is another clear declaration of His ministry to the Jew first. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

Not rebuffed at this, the woman beseeches Him, "Lord, help me," identifying herself with her daughter's need. Still stronger is the Lord's reply: "It is not good to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." It is a severe answer. We pass over the sternness of our Lord in these soft, sentimental days. Had the woman come with less than genuine, importunate faith, this would have sent her away insulted—this calling the Jews "children" and the Gentiles "dogs." But our Lord uses the term for little household dogs, and the woman catches the clue. "True, we may not have the bread, but surely we may share the crumbs." Here is humility and perseverance that will not be denied! It is he who is willing to take crumbs who receives bread.

Such faith draws from our Lord the gracious answer: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Notice, it is as

thou wilt. There is a faith that desires and asks, but here faith goes further and wills. Jesus tells us (Mark 11:23) that whoever shall command a mountain to be moved and shall not doubt but believe, he shall have whatever he says. Mind you, He does not say, "Whosoever shall ask God to move the mountain," but "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed." Here is faith that dares to command. "Concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me" (Isa. 45:11). Mark tells us that He said, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." Such faith always sends us on our way; and as we go we are cleansed, as it was with the lepers (Luke 17:14). The woman went, Mark tells us, and found it even as He had said. So did the nobleman (John 4:51). Oh, how rare is the faith that takes Him at His word and goes on believing! (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 7:37NKJV They were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well."**

One day over lunch this week, I asked my wife a strange question. It was sort of out of the blue, and she didn't know what to make of it. I asked her, "How would you react if a good friend came up to you and sliced you open with a knife?"

"Well," she said, shocked, "that would be terrible."

"Yes," I said, "but what if that friend were a surgeon and he was performing an operation that would save your life?"

Well, that's different, isn't it? We still wouldn't like it at the time, but we'd be grateful for a friend with enough skill to help us at a critical moment.

There are times when the Lord allows things to happen that we don't like at the time, but we know He intends all things for our good, that He does all things well, and that in all things we are more than conquerors. So, as Job put it, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

Our friend Jesus is the Great Physician, who will never harm us but will always do us good. Goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our lives. And even if it appears for a moment that He is harming us, we know it's in appearance only and not in reality, for it will inexorably turn for our good. We can trust Him completely and joyfully, for He does all things well.

Praise God who works all things for good

For those who love His name.

His providential care shall turn

All blessings into gain.

—RJM

[\(My All in All - Robert J Morgan\)](#)

## **Mark 8**

### **Mark 8:12**

He sighed deeply in his spirit.

This Evangelist twice over calls attention to the Lord's sighs — in Mark 7:34, and here. A sigh is one of the most touching and significant tokens of excessive grief! When Nature is too deeply overwrought to remember her necessary inspirations, and has to compensate for their omission by one deep-drawn breath, we sigh, we sigh deeply in our spirit.

Looking up to heaven, He sighed. — As the deaf table stood before Him — an image of all the closed hearts around Him; of all the inarticulate unexpressed desires; of all the sin and sorrow of mankind — the sensitive heart of Jesus responded with a deep-drawn sigh. But there was simultaneously a heavenward look, which mingled infinite hope in it. If the sigh spoke of his tender sympathy, the look declared his close union with God, by virtue, of which He was competent to meet the direst need. Whenever you sigh, look up to heaven. Heaven's light turns tears to jewels!

He sighed deeply. — The obdurate and impenetrable hardness of the Pharisees; their willful misinterpretation of his words and mission; their pride and bigotry — wrung the Lord's heart with bitterness. He turned sorrowfully away. There was no possibility of furnishing help, since on their side there was no desire for it, or belief in Him. Perhaps such sighs still break from his heart, as He views mankind; but through them He is doing his best to bring about the time when all sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

The Son of God, in doing good, would look to heaven and sigh; but his sighs were followed by the touch and word of power. Let us not be content with the sigh of sympathy and regret. Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily.

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**Mark 8:4 God Shall Provide** - Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? (Ps. 78:19). From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness (Mark 8:4)?

1. When our Lord fed the multitude there was a bread problem. There was a budget proposed. Philip "made an estimate" that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not feed such a crowd.

2. There was a boy presented, Andrew, always introducing somebody to Jesus (the Greeks who came to see Him, his brother, Peter) said, "There is a lad here."

3. There was a bounty provided, plenty of food with basketsfull left over. When God provides, there is always a surplus, for He giveth liberally. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 8:11-13 - The Agnostic** - An agnostic scientist once asked author Dorothy Sayers to write a letter to his scientific organization setting forth her reasons for believing in the Christian faith. The letter he received back was not at all what the scientist had expected. It read:

"Why do you want a letter from me? Why don't you take the trouble to find out for yourselves what Christianity is? You take time to learn technical terms about electricity. Why don't you do as much for theology? Why do you accept mildewed old heresies as the language of the church, when any handbook of church history will tell you where they came from? Why do you balk at the doctrine of the Trinity—God, the Three in One—yet meekly acquiesce when Einstein tells you that  $E=MC^2$ ? I admit you can practice Christianity without knowing much theology, just as you can drive a car without knowing much about internal combustion. But when something breaks down in the car, you humbly go to the man who understands the works; if something goes wrong with religion, you merely throw the works away and tell the theologian he is a liar. Why do you want a letter from me? You will never bother to check on it or find out whether I'm giving you personal opinions or Christian doctrines. Go away and do some work on your own and let me get on with mine."

From God Still Speaks in the Space Age, quoted in Connexions, a publication of Search Ministries, Vol. 1, No. 6, June, 1988, pp. 19-20 ([Bible.org](http://Bible.org))

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## Mark 8:34-38

**A LIFE THAT SATISFIES** - Whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. Mark 8:35

In his book 'Facing Loneliness', J. Oswald Sanders writes, "The round of pleasure or the amassing of wealth are but vain attempts to escape from the persistent ache ... The millionaire is usually a lonely man, and the comedian is often more unhappy than his audience."

Sanders goes on to emphasize that being successful often fails to produce satisfaction. Then he refers to Henry Martyn, a distinguished scholar, as an example of what he is talking about.

Martyn, a Cambridge University student, was honored at only 20 years of age for his achievements in mathematics. In fact, he was given the highest recognition possible in that field. And yet he felt an emptiness inside. He said that instead of finding fulfillment in his achievements, he had "only grasped a shadow."

After evaluating his life's goals, Martyn sailed to India as a missionary at the age of 24. When he arrived, he prayed, "Lord, let me burn out for you." In the next 7 years that preceded his death, he translated the New Testament into three difficult Eastern Languages. These notable achievements were certainly not passing "shadows."

Real fulfillment comes in following Christ. A life lived fully for the Lord is a life that truly satisfies. - R De Haan, Our Daily Bread.

If we commit ourselves to Christ

And follow in His way,

He'll give us life that satisfies

With purpose for each day. --Sper

**A fulfilled life is a life full of love for the Lord and others.**

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## Mark 8:34

**Going the Way Jesus Went** - If anyone wants to learn what it means to go the way Jesus went, he must do three things. First he must give up all right to himself; that is, cease bothering about self-preservation, self-aggrandizement, and self-protection against ridicule, and abandon self-assertion as a way of life. This is how the world is crucified to me (Gal. 6:14). Second, he must take up



his cross: that is, settle for a life into which the world's favor and esteem do not enter. Only criminals going to execution—people from whom the world's favor has been totally withdrawn—carried crosses in those days. This is how I am crucified to the world (Gal. 6:14). Third, the would-be disciple must follow Jesus by accepting as leader and guide one who was even then on his way to execution and who expected to involve his disciples in sufferings like his own. This, says Jesus, is the only path that leads to life. Paul wrote: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). This brings together both aspects of the Christian's identification with Christ; acceptance of Christ's cross as both the end of the old life and the pattern of the new one. - from *Your Father Loves You* by James Packer ([Bible.org](http://Bible.org))

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**Mark 8:34 - Bread in the Wilderness** - From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness. Mark 8:4.

"Bread in the wilderness" sounds as incongruous as "streams in the desert." Remember the Old Testament complaint, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (Ps. 78:19). Indeed, no man could meet such an emergency, but our Lord did. With the five thousand, the miracle moved in three stages. There was a lack of bread. Jesus asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" but He knew what He would do, as He always knew. Philip surmised that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not be enough. We are always "making an estimate," like Philip, but we leave out the supernatural. There was a little bread. Five loaves and two fishes amount to little, either in quantity or quality, but "little is much if God is in it." So a little bread became a lot of bread. There was a surplus of twelve basketfuls. God never deals niggardly. If each disciple gathered a basket full he had more than he started with! And all because "there is a lad here." His little in Jesus' hands became a lot. No man can furnish a table in the wilderness, but Jesus and a boy can do it. (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 8:35**

"But whoever loses his life for My sake . . . will save it" (Mark 8:35).

Shortly after the Civil War ended, General William T. Sherman's victorious army was scheduled to march in a triumphal parade in a large city. On the night before, Sherman called General Oliver O. Howard to his room and said, "General, you were at the head of one of the divisions that marched with me through Georgia, and you ought rightfully to ride at the head of your division in the parade tomorrow. But I've been asked to let the general who preceded you in command represent the division. I don't know what to do." General Howard replied, "I think I am entitled to represent my division, since I led them to victory." "Yes, you are," said Sherman, "but I believe you are a Christian, and I was wondering if Christian considerations might lead you to yield your rights for the sake of peace." "In that case," said Howard, "of course I'll yield." "All right," said General Sherman, "I will go arrange it, and will you please report to me in the morning at 9? You will be riding with me at the head of the army." General Howard's willingness to submit to his commander and deny himself his rightful place led to the position of greatest honor.

Jesus said, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me" (John 12:26). When He was reviled and opposed, He did not insist on His rights but "committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). That same spirit should characterize His followers. If we as Christians give our lives to serve others for Christ's sake, we will win His reward. Our "loss" will be our gain. —P. R. Van Gorder. *Our Daily Bread*

**Getting our own way  
serves only to get in the way of our service.**

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### **Mark 8:36**

Riches, Fleeting and Uncertain: It is said that about 200 years ago, the tomb of the great conqueror Charlemagne was opened. The sight the workmen saw was startling. There was his body in a sitting position, clothed in the most elaborate of kingly garments, with a scepter in his bony hand. On his knee lay the Holy Scriptures, with a cold, lifeless finger pointing to Mark 8:36: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

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### **Mark 8:36**

**King's Authority** - Many years ago a primitive tribe observed a custom of electing a king every 7 years. During his reign he was given authority to do whatever he wanted. But there was one hitch! At the end of his brief reign he was put to death to make way for a new leader. Believe it or not, there were always men who were willing to exchange their lives for 7 years of power and indulgence. - Daily Walk, August 6, 1993 ([Bible.org](http://Bible.org))

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### **Mark 8:36**

When the great ocean liner Titanic sank in 1912, it was rumored to have gone down with a fortune in jewels and gold. That longstanding myth was dispelled, however, by the discovery of the ship's manifest, which showed that the ship was carrying raw feathers, linen, straw, hatter's fur, tissue, auto parts, leather, rabbit hair, elastics, hair nets, and refrigerating equipment.

There is another persistent rumor about riches. It is widely believed that a wealthy person should be honored and valued, even though he may be ungodly. On the other hand, a godly, self-disciplined person is considered by some to be of little worth if he is not wealthy.

David, the author of Psalm 37, cautioned the poor and needy not to be envious of the rich and prosperous. This life is only the beginning of an everlasting existence. So don't look longingly at the ungodly and their riches. They have no lasting treasures. Instead, wait with patience for your eternal reward. —M. R. De Haan. II

It's better to be poor and walk by faith than to be rich and walk by sight

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**Mark 8:36 - LIFE'S POOREST INVESTMENT** - For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Mark 8:36. Here is life's poorest investment, to gain even a whole world and lose one's soul. A coat of leopard skin hung in the window of a fur shop. A wag who walked by remarked, "That old cat was better off before he was worth so much!" A man who has gained riches at the expense of his soul may be the envy of some who pass by his mansion, but he has pauperized himself for all eternity. A man is just as rich as his investment in the bank of heaven. John wished that Gaius might prosper and be in health as his soul prospered. That is God's standard for a wise investor! (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 8:36, 37**

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Matthew 16:26

The most precious possession a man has is his soul! However, sin and Satan have so blinded the eyes of the unsaved that they abuse, degrade, and bargain away this "jewel of God" for a pittance. Unless grace enlightens them, they will carelessly barter away their eternal future for a few fleeting moments of earthly pleasure or transient success; yet Jesus in His Word makes it abundantly clear that there is no greater tragedy than a lost soul!

A young man, distinguished for his mathematical attainments, was fond of challenging his fellow students to a trial of skill in solving difficult problems. One day a classmate came into his study and handed him a folded paper, saying, "Here is a problem I wish you would solve." Then he immediately left the room. The paper was eagerly spread out and read, but instead of a question in mathematics, there appeared the solemn words of Jesus: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36, 37). With a gesture of impatience, the mathematician tore the paper to bits and turned again to his books. In vain he tried to shake off the conviction the heart-searching words had produced. The Holy Spirit continued to press home the truth of his guilt and eternal danger so that he could find no peace until he had made sure of his soul's destiny by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. The story goes that subsequently he became a preacher of the Gospel, and that his first sermon was from the very words that brought him to Christ: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Have you given your most precious possession to Jesus? Re-member, that soul of yours is only safe in His keeping! (Our Daily Bread)

When thou, in the dust art forgotten,

When pleasure can charm thee no more,

'Twill profit thee nothing, but fearful the cost,

To gain the whole world, if thy soul should be lost! — F. Crosby

**Life with Christ is an endless hope;  
Without Him it is a hope-less end!**

## **Mark 9**

### **Mark 9:2-29**

**Austrian Peasant** - One day an Austrian peasant spotted three men in hunting garb. Thinking they looked tired, he offered them a ride in his cart. The men accepted and struck up a conversation.

“Who are you?” the driver asked one of the passengers.

“I’m the king of Saxony,” was the reply. The peasant nodded and asked the next man the same question.

“The king of Bavaria,” said the second passenger.

“And you,” the peasant went on skeptically to the third passenger, “I suppose you’re the emperor of Austria?”

The amazing thing is that it was the emperor of Austria! The man was Francis Joseph I, emperor of Austria from 1848-1916. Would that peasant have acted differently if he had known that we was addressing his sovereign? Of course! - Today in the Word, 1995

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**Mark 9:19 Bring The Boy To Me** - [Jesus] answered him and said, “. . . Bring him to Me.” —Mark 9:19

“I don’t believe in God and I won’t go,” Mark said.

Amy struggled to swallow the lump in her throat. Her son had changed from a happy boy to a surly and uncooperative young man. Life was a battleground, and Sunday had become a day to dread, as Mark refused to go to church with the family. Finally his despairing parents consulted a counselor, who said: “Mark must make his own faith journey. You can’t force him into the kingdom. Give God space to work. Keep praying, and wait.”

Amy waited—and prayed. One morning the words of Jesus that she had read echoed through her mind. Jesus’ disciples had failed to help a demon-possessed boy, but Jesus had the answer: “Bring him to Me” (Mark 9:19). The sun shone through the window at Amy’s side, making a pool of light on the floor. If Jesus could heal in such an extreme situation, then surely He could also help her son. She pictured herself and Mark standing in that light with Jesus. Then she mentally stepped back, leaving her son alone with the One who loved him even more than she did.

Every day Amy silently handed Mark to God, clinging to the assurance that He knew Mark’s needs, and would in His time and in His way, work in his life. By [Marion Stroud](#)

Father, I lift my beloved to You, knowing that  
You love him even more than I do and  
You understand just what to do to meet  
his need. I commit him to Your care.

Prayer is the voice of faith trusting that God knows and cares.

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## **Mark 9:22–23**

If Thou canst.... And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst!

Yes, there was an if in this sad case. But the father put it in the wrong place. He put it against Christ’s power, “If Thou canst do anything.” But it was really on the side of his own ability to believe. If only he believed, all else would be easily possible. Even though his faith were small, it would suffice; the tiniest seed can appropriate the chemical products of the soil, and transmute them into digestible products; the narrowest channel will suffice for the passage of the waters of the whole ocean, if you give time enough. Let us not worry about the greatness or smallness of our faith; the main point is as to whether it is directed towards the living Savior.

There are many issues to which these words may be applied. If Jesus can save me from the power of sin! No; if thou canst believe, He can. If Jesus can deliver out of a mesh of temptation and perplexity! No; if thou canst believe, He will. If Jesus can revive his work mightily to the upbuilding of his Church and the ingathering of the lost! No; if thou canst believe for it.

Dost thou want that faith? It may be had thus. Look away from difficulty and temptation to Jesus; consider Him; feed thy faith on its native food of promise; familiarize thyself with fellowship with the promises; study what He has done for others: thus thou wilt believe. For every thought of thy little faith take ten thoughts of his faithfulness.

“All things are possible to God,  
To Christ the power of God in man;  
To me, when I am all subdued,  
When I in Christ am formed again,

And witness from my sins set free,  
All things are possible to me."  
Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 9:22, 23 - IF** - If thou canst do any thing.... If thou canst believe.... Mark 9:22, 23.

Martha and Mary said, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:21). Jesus said, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God" (John 11:40). The father of the demonized boy had the wrong if. There are no ifs about what God can do. The ifs are on our side. That harassed father finally got around to the solution: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). He confessed unbelief but took sides with his faith. We are so inclined to say, "I doubt, help Thou my faith." We need to stop being iffy and be not faithless but believing. (Vance Havner)

**"If Thou Canst—" "If Thou canst do any thing.... If thou canst believe...." Mark 9:22, 23**

The father of the afflicted boy was looking at the wrong "If." Our Lord speedily corrected him. It is not a matter of Christ's ability to help; it is always a matter of our willingness to believe. "According to your faith be it unto you."

Nor is it a matter of his willingness. The leper put it, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." At once Jesus clears that point: "I will; be thou clean" (Matt. 8:2, 3).

We have continually tried to saddle the responsibility for our meager and miserable condition on the Lord. He threw the issue clearly on us. If we do not reign in life it is because we do not receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17). After these centuries of preaching we do not yet believe that "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Of course, this does not mean just any kind of faith in anything or anybody. All things are possible to him that believeth if he believes in him with whom all things are possible.

It is up to you: "If thou canst believe." If we can get a real faith the signs will follow, we shall have the miracles. The day of miracles has not passed but the day of faith has. "According to your faith" is the measure of what God will do for you. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 9:22-23 "Only Believe"**

When the father of a demon-possessed boy brought his son to Jesus, he said, "If thou canst do any thing...." Jesus replied, "If thou canst believe" (Mark 9:22, 23). There are no "ifs" about what God can do. The "if" is with us. Anything is possible within the limits of God's Word and God's will, our need and our faith. Believing God is not religious auto-suggestion. It is not the flesh engaged in positive thinking. It is the Christian, the one in whom Christ lives, taking God at His Word.

God's Word and will, our need and our faith do impose certain restrictions. We often want what we do not need. God did not remove Paul's thorn in the flesh but He did something better, perfecting His strength in Paul's weakness. Within these limitations there are blessings innumerable if we only believe.

Chanting, "I believe," does not guarantee results as though we had a magic password. Exploring God's Word we will discover blessings we did not know were in His will. And we need some intensive investigation of what we really need. There are rich people riding around in limousines who have never found out what they really need. And there are sickly Christians living on crackers and cheese when they have a standing invitation to the feast of the grace of God. What a shake-up in status there is when we find out what is ours now in Christ Jesus!

Positive thinking will not do it unless we balance it with some good negative thinking that says "no" to the devil while it says "yes" to God. To put on the Lord Jesus and make no provision for the flesh is a good sample of true positive-negative thinking. "Only believe" depends on whom you believe and why. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 9:23**

**Misplaced "If"** - The man to whom Jesus spoke these words had a son with a mute spirit. Having just seen the disciples powerless to cast out the spirit, he doubted whether their Master could help him. Therefore he said to Jesus, "But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us" (Mark 9:22).

Now there was an if in his plea, but the poor, trembling father had put the if in the wrong place. Jesus didn't command him to retract the if, but He put it where it belonged. He seemed to say, "There should be no if about My power or willingness—the if lies somewhere else." Jesus countered the father's if with another if. "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." The man's trust was strengthened, and he humbly asked for help to overcome his unbelief. Instantly Jesus spoke the word, and the boy was healed.

Like this man, we often see an if in relation to our problems. And we too put it in the wrong place. "If Jesus can help me overcome this sinful habit." "If He can change my life." No, the real issue is, if we can believe, He both can and will respond.

Is there something you know is God's will for your life but you have doubts? Maybe you've misplaced your if. - H. G. Bosch, Our Daily Bread ([Bible.org](http://Bible.org))

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**Mark 9:24 - FEED YOUR FAITH AND STARVE YOUR DOUBT!**- Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. Mark 9:24.

This father of a demonized boy had both faith and unbelief, but he took sides with his faith against his unbelief. Whatever we feed grows stronger. What we starve dies eventually. Your faith may be small, even as a grain of mustard seed, but feed it on the Word and exercise it unto godliness and it will gain strength by the day. Pay no attention to your doubts, no matter how feelings may clamor, and they will grow weaker. It is as simple as that. I did not say as easy as that, for Christian maturity is not reached easily, but it is as plain as that if we but follow it. (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 9:35,33-41**

IN Jesus' day, people couldn't go to a refrigerator and take out a bottle of cold water or chill a beverage by adding ice cubes. To give a cup of cold water required going to a spring—maybe far away on a hill among rocks. Or it meant going to a deep well, letting down a bucket, and pulling it back up. In other words, giving a cup of cold water required sacrifice.

Many people wait a lifetime to do something great, overlooking what they could have accomplished by countless small deeds done with self-sacrifice and love. The size of a loving deed is not what counts the most. Rather, it's the motive behind it and the sacrifice that accompanies it.

A poet has written, "It was only a cup of water with a gentle grace bestowed, but it cheered the lonely traveler upon life's dusty road. None noticed the cup of water as a beautiful act of love, save the angels keeping the records away in the land above. The trifles in secret given, the prayer in the quiet night, and the little unnoticed nothings are great in our Savior's sight!"

If all you can give is a cup of water, make sure it is cold and refreshing and give it with love and sacrifice. Whatever you do in Christ's name, taking no credit for yourself, is sure to be a blessing to those who are needy.—H G Bosch

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### **Mark 9:37**

**Take The Time** - Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. --Mark 9:37

A legend is told about a rabbi from a small Jewish town. The people had gathered in the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), but when the time came for the most important service of the Jewish year to begin, the rabbi was nowhere to be found.

During the delay, a young mother went home to check on her little daughter, whom she had left sleeping. To her surprise, she saw the rabbi sitting quietly in a chair, holding the child in his arms. He had been walking by her home on the way to the synagogue when he heard the infant crying and stopped to help. He held the little one until she fell asleep.

There's a lesson for us in this rabbi's example and in Jesus' love for people (Mt. 9:18-26). In our hectic and busy lives, we tend to get so caught up with our own concerns that we lose our sense of compassion for others. We must take time to observe and respond to individuals--whether they are little children, parents, or older believers.

Somewhere amid all the demands on you as a servant of Jesus Christ, take the time to hold the hand of an aging believer, to comfort a tired mother, or to cradle a child until she sleeps. --D C Egner - Our Daily Bread.

How good to be an instrument

Of grace that He can use

At any time, in any place,

However He may choose! --Guirey

**Great occasions for service come seldom--  
little ones surround us daily.**

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### **Mark 9:38**

"Oh," said a woman to me the other day, "do you belong to us?" "Well," said I, "who are 'us?' That is a new denomination to me. I belong to Him." I like the Augustinian Creed: "A whole Christ for my salvation, whole Bible for my study, the whole church for my fellowship, and the whole world for my parish, that I may be a true catholic and not a sectarian." - Rev. Charles Inglis, in {Record of Christian Work}

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## Mark 9:41

A CHRISTIAN businessman picked up a young man who was hitchhiking in lightweight clothing on a very cold day. This small kindness eventually led to the salvation of the young man, his family, and some of his friends.

A twelve-year-old boy named Cliff Miller went daily to the fence surrounding the athletic field at Georgia State Penitentiary to talk with and witness to inmate Harold Morris. These contacts played a large part in Harold's eventual conversion. Since receiving a pardon, Harold has spoken to thousands of young people around the country about Jesus Christ.

We sometimes think that if we can't do something big for Christ we might as well do nothing. But even a smile can make someone's day go better. In the name of Jesus we can say an encouraging word, run an errand, mow a lawn, take a meal, care for a baby, or do a variety of other small favors. They will make an impact. Even if they do not produce immediate and spectacular results, God takes note of them.—H V Lugt

Thank You, Lord, for using and rewarding small acts of kindness. May I not be stingy with words of encouragement and acts of service. Our Daily Bread

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## Mark 9:42-48

FOR years, scaffolding in the Sistine Chapel has partially obscured the view of Michelangelo's sixteenth-century frescoes. Restorers have been carefully removing the dulling residue of candle smoke, incense, and dust.

Some people are critical of the project and say the colors on the ceiling are now too strong. But officials insist that the restoration enables visitors to see what the Renaissance master wanted them to see.

The debate is sure to continue, especially when the even sootier painting The Last Judgment is restored. The renewing of that scene, with its crowded figures crying out in hell, has a spiritual parallel that is just as soiled. Our generation has become accustomed to a very dull portrayal of the last judgment described by Jesus. Countless jokes and profanities have obscured the vivid picture Christ gave us. And many who believe in Him do not take Him seriously when He talks about a fire that will never be quenched.

To restore Christ's picture of hell, we need to look at what He said and to sense its reality. When we do, we will be thankful for our salvation and stimulated to pray for those who, if they continue in unbelief, will not escape God's wrath.—M R De Haan II. Our Daily Bread

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## Mark 9:44

**Guilt, In The Lake Of Fire: Could Not Quench It** - Last evening the members of Neptune Engine Company, No. 7, of Brooklyn, attended in a body the Second Baptist church, on Leonard street, to listen to a sermon by Rev. A. B. Earle. As the announcement was made public, the attendance at the church was so great that nearly half that came could not get inside.

"The services were opened by prayer, followed by singing, after which Mr. Earle delivered his discourse. He spoke in a plain but earnest manner, engaging the deep attention of his audience.

The text selected was from Mark 9:44 (cp Mk 9:48) 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' He said he should call their attention more particularly to the latter clause of the text. He thought nothing would grieve them more than to meet with a fire which they could not put out; they would go home sorrowful at heart should such an event happen to them. They had often met and subdued this enemy--fire; they had always quenched it; but he should speak to them of a fire which could never be quenched.

"He then divided his text into two parts; first, What the worm is that dieth not, and why it does not die; second, What the fire is that is not quenched, and why it is not quenched.

"The worm that never dies is guilty memory,--the remembrance of past guilt. Memory is like a living, gnawing worm, producing a restless pain in the soul, as a gnawing worm would do in the vitals of the body. Impressions once made upon the mind can never be effaced. A name once heard or mentioned, though forgotten for a time, will return in after years when circumstances shall recall it. Incidents of childhood carry their recollection to the grave. Memory is active when all else is still. In moments of peril the memory is more vivid and active, and thoughts of the past crowd upon the brain with inconceivable rapidity.

"Instances are often related of men in peril, by sea or land, who have seen the events of former days; recalled by memory; words

and deeds they had thought forgotten have returned to them; their past life has seemed to come before their mental vision with startling reality. When the soul shall have dropped its fetters, and passed beyond the restraints of flesh, memory will still be fresh and active. This memory which tenants the body during life, and clings to the spirit hereafter, is the gnawing of the deathless worm. This worm draws all its nourishment from this world.

"He cited as an instance of the activity of memory, and its effects, the case of a prisoner who was removed from one prison to another, where the treatment was better. The man said he did not like the new prison as well as the old one, although he did not have to work as hard, had better food and kinder keepers; but in the new prison the convicts were not allowed to speak to each other; and in this terrible silence his memory was ever active--it was all think, think, think. So it will be hereafter: we shall be constantly thinking. We should therefore be careful how we store the memory, since its recollections will ever be present with us.

"In the second part of his discourse he considered the fire that can never be quenched.

"They might believe that no fire could break out in the city which, by their skill and activity, they could not put out; and their fellow-citizens, confident in their ability, went to their repose, feeling that by the vigilance, tact, and energy of the firemen their lives and property were secure. But there is a fire that cannot be quenched: it is remorse, or the realization of our sin in the dark world of despair. The Saviour says it is better to have but one eye than to be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

"The fire of God's wrath is the sinner's realization of his wickedness, and a guilty remembrance of the past. The reason this fire cannot be quenched is, there is nothing there with which to quench it. Suppose a building was wrapped in flames, and the firemen brought their engines to the spot, but could find no water; they would be powerless, however good their intentions. So with the fire of God's wrath--the guilty remembrance in the world of despair; there will be nothing with which to put it out; there is nothing here that can quench it but the blood of Jesus.

"He called their attention to the heroic fireman, young Sperry, of New Haven, who went into a burning building to save a child supposed to be there, and lost his own life. He felt assured there was not one among that company whom he addressed but would rush, as Sperry did, into the flames to save a fellow-creature's life. So if he (the speaker), by rushing into the flames of perdition, could drag a brother out of the fire, how readily would he do it.

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**Mark 9:48 OBLIVIOUS TO ETERNAL DISASTER! - There is a place where their worm does not die but many refuse to believe.** They are like the people in the following illustration - There was a report in the news recently about a subway train in New York City that veered onto the wrong tracks. It happened on the A Line when the train operator pulled onto the wrong tracks as he left the Canal Street Station. He headed uptown on the downtown rails. The dispatcher saw what was happening and frantically tried to radio the train but the crew later said they never heard the emergency broadcasts. The driver continued for several stops unaware of his mistake until he saw the headlights of a southbound train coming toward him. Both trains managed to stop in time or it could have been a disaster. Interestingly, the passengers had no idea they were on the wrong tracks or that their lives were in danger. They sat there napping or reading their newspapers or listening to their earphones, oblivious to the potentially fatal mistake.

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## **Mark 9:50**

**Influence:** Jerry and his son, Rick, farmed together. Often, as they worked in the fields, Jerry would urge Rick to attend church with him. Most times Rick declined, electing to spend his Sunday mornings relaxing at home with his new wife. One day, as Rick operated the combine, Jerry jumped on to ride a few passes across the field with him. This time they talked about soybeans... how theirs were doing, and whether they should sell them at the current prices. As they talked, Jerry spotted a large rock in the combine's path. Rocks and combines do not mix. If ingested into the combine, a rock can do several hundred dollars worth of damage. Jerry jumped down and picked up the rock, placing it on the combines platform until he could put it somewhere out of harm's way. The next pass took them to the border of Leo's field. Jerry and Leo had been at odds for some time over a land dispute. As Rick drove the combine beside Leo's field, Jerry lifted the large rock and heaved it into Leo's field, where maybe his combine might find it. As he returned to the cab and closed the door, Rick looked at him. "If that's what being a Christian is all about," he said, "I want nothing to do with it."

**Impact of Religion:** Little Difference - The Princeton Religion Research Center has measured the impact of religion on day-to-day work. Comparing the "churched" with the "unchurched" on a wide range of behaviors like pilfering supplies, overstating qualifications on resumes, calling in sick when not sick and overstating tax deductions, the center finds "little difference in the ethical views and behavior of the churched and the unchurched." What differences there are "are not significant or are of marginal significance." If faith in God makes no difference in how we spend our money, how we use our time, how we behave on the job, then how important can it really be? - William Hendricks, Christianity Today, 11-25-91, p. 12 ([Bible.org](http://Bible.org))



## Mark 10

### Mark 10:13-16

**HUGS OF THE HEART** - "He took them up in His arms...and blessed them."- Mark 10:16

While Jesus lived on this earth, He took little children in His arms and blessed them (Mk. 10:16). And He is still in the child-embracing ministry today.

My friend told me about a touching conversation between her two grandchildren. Five-year-old Matthew said to Sarah, age 3, "I talk to Jesus in my head!" She responded, "I don't -- I just cuddle with Him!"

Many other children of God, much older ones, have experienced His unseen everlasting arms around them and beneath them. Brother Lawrence, the 17th-century monk known for sensing the presence of God amid the pots and pans of the monastery's kitchen, spoke of being "known of God and extremely caressed by Him."

And Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary to China, scrawled this note as he neared the end of his life:

"I am so weak that I cannot work; I cannot read my Bible; I cannot even pray. I can only lie still in God's arms like a child, and trust."

God wants us to nestle close to Him in childlike trust, whether young or old, strong or weak. In response, through His indwelling Spirit He draws us to Himself to comfort and to bless. Have you and God had a hug of the heart today? - J E Yoder, Our Daily Bread

The Lord took children in His arms

To bless them and to show

That if we come in childlike faith

His presence we will know. -- Sper

**Don't wrestle -- just nestle. -- Corrie ten Boom**

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### Mark 10:17-31

Do not love the world or the things in the world (1John 2:15)- An old fable tells about a crane that was wading in a stream looking for snails when a beautiful swan landed nearby. The crane had never seen a swan before, so he asked, "What are you?" "I'm a swan," came the reply. "And where did you come from?" the crane inquired. "Heaven," the swan answered. "What is that?" asked the crane. the swan eagerly began to explain its beauty and glory. He spoke of the new Jerusalem, the city of pure gold with a jasper wall and pearly gates. He described its "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal." At that point the crane interrupted, "Tell me, are there any snails in heaven?" "No, I'm afraid not," the swan said. "Then I don't care to go there," the crane stated decisively. "I like snails!" - Our Daily Bread

Mark 10:21 When the rich young ruler came to Jesus desiring eternal life, the Lord told him to liquidate all his assets and give away the family fortune. What if He said that to us? A key to understanding this story is to realize when it occurred. It didn't happen alongside the Sea of Galilee in the early, refreshing years of Christ's ministry; it occurred just days before Calvary. Jesus was on His final approach to Jerusalem, and the cross overshadowed His way. Satan was going to sift His followers as wheat. Time was short, and earthly possessions were a liability. I've found 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 a useful cross-reference: "The time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away" (NIV). Because of the urgency of the times, we should live with a certain detachment to the things of this world, as Luther the Reformer told us:

Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also.

The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still.

His Kingdom is forever.

[\(My All in All - Robert J Morgan\)](#)

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**Mark 10:13-16 - Who Are You Defending?** Read: Mark 10:13–16 | At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6

When Kathleen's teacher called her to the front of the grammar class to analyze a sentence, she panicked. As a recent transfer student, she hadn't learned that aspect of grammar. The class laughed at her.

Instantly the teacher sprang to her defense. "She can out-write any of you any day of the week!" he explained. Many years later, Kathleen gratefully recalled the moment: "I started that day to try to write as well as he said I could." Eventually, Kathleen Parker would win a Pulitzer Prize for her writing.

Father, help me to love others as You do.

As did Kathleen's teacher, Jesus identified with the defenseless and vulnerable. When His disciples kept children away from Him, He grew angry. "Let the little children come to me," He said, "and do not hinder them" (Mark 10:14). He reached out to a despised ethnic group, making the Good Samaritan the hero of His parable (Luke 10:25-37) and offering genuine hope to a searching Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4:1-26). He protected and forgave a woman trapped in adultery (John 8:1-11). And though we were utterly helpless, Christ gave His life for all of us (Rom. 5:6).

When we defend the vulnerable and the marginalized, we give them a chance to realize their potential. We show them real love, and in a small but significant way we reflect the very heart of Jesus.

Father, help me recognize the people in my life who need someone to stand with them. Forgive me for thinking that it's "not my problem." Help me to love others as You do.

It is impossible to love Christ without loving others.

**INSIGHT:** Jesus rebuked the disciples for seeking to sideline children. He actually welcomed open access to those who sought contact with Him. The rationale given was that "the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14). What could Jesus possibly mean? Most likely went through the disciples' minds. Our Lord then qualified what He said: "Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (v. 15). A child is more likely to express faith than a skeptical adult is. We are to follow their example and believe and rely on the promises of God. After this explanation, Jesus physically showed His acceptance by taking the children in His arms and blessing them. By [Tim Gustafson](#)

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**Mark 10:15 - Childish or Childlike?** - "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Mark 10:15

There are three kinds of people. First, the children: "And he took a child and set him in the midst of them" (Mark 9:36). Then, there are the childish: "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children..." (Matt. 11:16). No generation has been more fretful, petulant, hard-to-please than this. We have heard all kinds of preaching: the leaven of the Pharisees in orthodoxy without Spirit; the leaven of the Sadducees in liberalism and modernism; fads and isms galore; and also the true gospel. But we are like the childish souls of Jesus' time who liked neither John's fasting nor our Lord's feasting.

We cannot stay children and we must not be childish, but we should be childlike: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). A child doesn't reason it out; he either believes or he doesn't, he loves or he doesn't. Blessed is that Christian who can accept at the start by simple faith that which others reach only through years of questioning and reach it only then because they give up trying to analyze it and decide to accept it. Why not save time by starting out with that? You have to come to it anyway, or to despair. Verily, God has kept these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes (Matt. 11:25). (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 10:7-27 - Knowing and Doing** - Read: Mark 10:17-27 | With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God. Mark 10:27

Chinese philosopher Han Feizi made this observation about life: "Knowing the facts is easy. Knowing how to act based on the facts is difficult."

A rich man with that problem once came to Jesus. He knew the law of Moses and believed he had kept the commandments since his youth (Mark 10:20). But he seems to be wondering what additional facts he might hear from Jesus. " 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' " (Mk 10:17).

All things are possible with God. (Mark 10:27)

Jesus' answer disappointed the rich man. He told him to sell his possessions, give the money to the poor, and follow Him (Mk 10:21). With these few words Jesus exposed a fact the man didn't want to hear. He loved and relied on his wealth more than he trusted Jesus. Abandoning the security of his money to follow Jesus was too great a risk, and he went away sad (Mk 10:22).

What was the Teacher thinking? His own disciples were alarmed and asked, "Who then can be saved?" He replied, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God" (Mk 10:27). It takes courage and faith. "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

God, thank You for the good news of Jesus. Give us the courage to act on what we know to be true, and to accept the salvation offered through Jesus. Thank You that You will give us the strength to act on the facts.

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Acts 16:31

INSIGHT: The rich young ruler (Matt. 19:20; Luke 18:18) believed he had earned his place in heaven (Mark 10:19–20). But Jesus revealed that the young man had put his trust in material things (Mk 10:21–22) and that salvation is obtained when we love God first and trust in Jesus only (Mk 10:21). [By Poh Fang Chia](#)

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### **Mark 10:21 - Lacking "One Thing" or "Nothing" Lacked ye anything? Luke 22:35. One thing thou lackest. Mark 10:21.**

When the disciples went forth at the bidding of Jesus without purse or scrip or shoes, they lacked nothing. The rich young ruler had purse and scrip and shoes, but when he went away he lacked one thing, and, lacking that, he lacked everything. When we obey our Lord's orders and go forth by His commission we find His grace sufficient and our needs supplied through God's riches in glory by Christ Jesus. But a man may have all else, yet if he be not willing to abandon it all for the Master, he is a pauper. The supreme thing in this life is to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. A man may have kept other commandments, but if he will not cut loose from his dearest earthly treasure at the bidding of the Lord, he has failed at the vital point and is still a rebel. Nothing matters but this: does Jesus have the utter absolute first and final say in your life? If He does, you will lack nothing. (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 10:32**

And Jesus was going before them. (r.v.)

The radiant vision of the Transfiguration was deliberately forsaken, as the Lord took the way of the cross, going to Jerusalem to die. The shadow of his awful exodus had already fallen upon the little group. Behold that resolute figure — the wan face lit up with the fire of an invincible resolve — going in front, climbing the difficult ascent. The apostles cannot keep step with his eager steps, and they fear as an instinctive dread of coming events caste its chilling mantle around them. There was something in their Master they could not understand.

Such moments come to all lives, when Jesus leads us to the cross. How often He asks for a deeper consecration; a more complete crossing of natural inclination for the sake of his Gospel; an intenser purpose. At his bidding we must tear ourselves away from ambitions which had fascinated, and dreams which had allured. We must no longer live on the lower level, however pleasant to flesh and blood, but gird ourselves to go up to Jerusalem.

At such moments He always goes before us. We may not see Him until we begin to follow in the direction of his voice; but so soon as we set ourselves to obey, we become aware of his prevenient grace. He is just in front. He never puts forth his own sheep without going before them. He never asks us to tread a path which has not been trodden by his footsteps. Happy are they who follow Him!

In the first effort to follow Jesus, there may be amazement and not a little fear. The unaccustomed path, the strange look on his face, the shadow of the cross — all dissuade us. But as He dilates on the joy set before Him and us, we learn to think lightly of the difficulties in comparison with the goal. - Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily.

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### **Mark 10:13-22 - "One Thing Thou Lackest"**

THERE is no more touching scene in all the life of our Lord than His blessing the little children (Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17). Let it never be forgotten that the true Christian is childlike. We often think that the walk of faith is a profound matter that only a few can learn, when really it is a simple matter that few ever reach because they will not unlearn—get down to its simplicity. To be converted and become as little children was our Lord's way of stating it (Matt. 18:3), but that does not appeal to our vanity and pride, so very few ever meet those plain terms.

The incident of the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23) sets forth a model young man who still lacks something and knows it, but does not meet the demand of Christ. How Jesus always put His finger on the weak spot in every life! Here the trouble was in the young man's great possessions—so that must be removed. He would not be saved by giving up his possessions, but his possessions were the hindrance that must be cleared before he could ever be a disciple.

Some do not like negative preaching today, and they tell us we should never emphasize giving up—but here our Lord certainly did, as in many other cases.

There is irony in the statement that the young man went away grieved because "he had great possessions." As a matter of fact, he had nothing and had missed his chance of true riches.

Jesus commented on the difficulty of a rich man entering heaven, not because he is rich so much as because he must become as though he had nothing and be poor in spirit, and very few will do that. A rich man need not give up his property unless specially led to do so, but he must be as though he had it not. Our Lord went on to give the parable of the laborers in the vineyard who went to work at different hours, yet each received the same pay (Matt. 20:1-16). It can be understood only in the light of what has just gone before. Peter had just spoken of their having forsaken all to follow Jesus, as though he expected greater reward for the disciples than for others. But we learn here that God has no favorites and that all receive the same reward, in kind if not in degree. The disciples expected greater reward because they followed earlier, but Paul and Stephen and Barnabas outshone most of them later. The whole story is based upon the principle "the first shall be last and the last first." That principle still is true, and we cannot measure reward by our own estimates, by length of service or any other external considerations.

Many are called with a general calling, but few are chosen because few respond. And there is no favoritism among those chosen. The reward of all servants is to dwell in God's Presence. Men may have varying capacities for the enjoyment of this reward but God Himself is our reward, as He told Abraham. Above all else stands the sovereignty of God and His right to manage His own business as He pleases. Jesus does not try to teach everything in one parable, and we do wrong to try to cover too much in one lesson. This simply teaches impartiality in God's rewards.

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**Mark 10:21 - ONE THING THOU LACKEST** - One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. Mark 10:21.

Lacking one thing, the Rich Young Ruler lacked everything. He had great possessions, we are told, but he was a pauper for he had no investments in heaven. He had morals, manners, and money, but he never sold out to Jesus Christ. He would not become involved in that cause. We had better save our scorn until we have taken stock of ourselves. Multitudes of well-fixed church members have kept the law and have been interested in eternal life but have never made the Big Giveaway. The cause of Christ demands total involvement. We suffer the loss of all things, but all things are ours and having nothing we possess everything! (Vance Havner)

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### "One Thing"

1. One thing thou lackest. (Mark 10:21).
2. One thing is needful (Luke 10:42).
3. One thing I know ..... (John 9:25).
4. One thing I do (Phil. 3:13).

--Vance Havner

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**Mark 10:32-34 - Out to See Jesus** - THERE came the day when Jesus told His disciples of His approaching death (Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34). He knew from the beginning that He must die. It was no mere happening, but part of the Divine plan from all eternity. But beyond the cross He saw also the resurrection.

How distressing is the contrast when, immediately after this statement and the parable of laborers, should come the request of James and John for favored places in His kingdom! How much they had to learn! They were to drink of the cup of persecution, but only God could award places. Jesus rebuked the spirit that seeks the upper places. We are great only as we serve. He Himself declares that He came to give His life a ransom for many—a clear statement of the atonement.

Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52) is a type of the sinner, blind and begging. No matter what else you see or what else you own, if Christ has not opened your eyes, you are a blind beggar. Bartimaeus cried out. Emotion has been outlawed in our churches, but if sinners truly realized their plight they would cry for mercy while Jesus is passing by. Notice that some tried to discourage Bartimaeus, and even Christians may discourage earnest seekers, but Jesus can hear the sinner's cry over all the din and tumult. Notice that Bartimaeus knew what he needed first and most: his sight. And when he received it he followed Christ, glorifying God. That is the Christian experience: first the new sight, then following the Lord with joy.

Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) was a tax-collector for Rome and a Jew, which made a despised combination. But he sought to see Jesus. We crowd the streets when the President passes, but how many go to pains to see Jesus. Zacchaeus was little of stature and could not get through the crowd. The things that get in one's way when he starts out to see Jesus! These people also were out to see Jesus, so sometime even good people with good intentions get in the way of the seeking sinner. But Zacchaeus would not be discouraged; he climbed a sycamore. There is always a sycamore for the man who really wants a blessing. Of course, it was not dignified to climb the tree, but when a man really wants to get through to Jesus he will forget dignity and custom and press through the crowd, or tear up the roof, or climb a tree to get through to Christ. How we need a holy desperation today that will not be stopped short of Jesus!

Mind you, Zacchaeus was on the right road, "for He was to pass that way." There are some roads Christ does not travel: pride, haughtiness, mere morality, skepticism. And Jesus saw Zacchaeus. Christ is always looking for the seeking soul. He told Zacchaeus

He was going home with him. Christ wants to live with us, not merely meet us at church. And Zacchaeus came down in haste and received Him joyfully and offered to make restitution for all his past money-grabbing. It is a fine evidence of regeneration when a man gives back the things that don't belong to him. This man's faith hit his pocketbook! He was not saved because he did this, he did this because he was saved. He was a double child of Abraham, by flesh and by faith. Jesus is passing by. Set out to see Him though you must climb a sycamore. (Vance Havner)

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### Mark 10:43

**A W Tozer** - Desire to Be Great - From the words of Jesus to His disciples we may properly conclude that there is nothing wrong with the desire to be great, provided

- (1) we seek the right kind of greatness;
- (2) we allow God to decide what greatness is;
- (3) we are willing to pay the full price that greatness demands; and
- (4) we are content to wait for the judgment of God to settle the matter at last!

It is vitally important, however, that we know what Christ meant when He used the word great in relation to people. No one whose heart has had a vision of God will ever consent to think of himself as being great. There are two kinds of greatness recognized in the Scriptures: an absolute uncreated greatness belonging to God alone, and a relative and finite greatness achieved by or bestowed upon certain friends of God and sons and daughters of faith, who by obedience and self-denial seek to become as much like God as possible ([Bible.org](http://Bible.org)).

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### Mark 10:45

Englishman George Atley, a missionary to Africa, was attacked by a party of natives. He had with him a Winchester repeating rifle with 10 loaded chambers. The attackers were completely at his mercy. Calmly and quickly the missionary summed up the situation. He concluded that if he killed the natives he would do more harm to the mission than if he allowed them to take his life. When his body was found in the stream, his rifle also was found with its 10 chambers still loaded. George Atley could have saved himself. He chose to give his life for others - for the cause of Christ. Jesus did not have to go to the cross. He could have saved Himself. He chose to give His life to save sinners from the power and penalty of sin. In His sacrificial death, He came to "give his life a ransom for many"

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**Mark 10:42-45** - John Newton, whose own conversion is reflected in his beloved hymn "Amazing Grace," had these words put on his tombstone: "A servant of slaves." It reminds us of Gregory I who called himself "the servant of the servants of God."

A well-known television evangelist once produced a program entitled "What Do You Want God to Do in Your Life?" That's really the wrong question. The question is "What does God want me to do with the life he has given me?"

In the heart of Cartagena, Colombia, stands the church of San Pedro Claver, his bones enshrined beneath the altar. Once Cartagena was the largest slave market in the world. That was when Father Claver came to care for the sick, and to teach and baptize. He called himself the "slave of slaves."

Jeremy Bentham was the founder of London's University College. When he died in 1832, according to his instructions, his skeleton was reconstructed, given a wax head, dressed in his best suit, and put in a glass case in the meeting room of the college's board of governors. For many years the deceased Bentham attended every meeting of the board and was always described in the minutes as "present, but not voting." Sometimes we are present, but not serving!

In American slang, a white elephant is something useless to its owner. Rummage sales used to have lots of white elephants. In Thailand, the white elephant is a symbol of great honor. Some years ago, a medical missionary, Dr. Garland Bare, was given the "Most Exalted Order of the White Elephant" by the king of Thailand. He went there to serve the King of Kings, but the king of Thailand recognized his service to the country. Your service and mine may not be recognized here on earth, and we may not receive honors during our lives. But Jesus assures us that even the cup of cold water given in loving service will be recognized and honored in Heaven.

When Archie and Hattie Watters went from Scotland to India as missionaries, they noticed that when a man became a Christian he cut off his hair. His pigtail had been a symbol of his old faith. Cutting it off was a sign to the whole community that he had renounced the old pagan ways and had accepted Jesus Christ as Lord. We have more subtle ways to show our Christianity. We do it by loving

and unselfish service.

Only in very recent years have the Masai of Kenya been evangelized. Among them is a man named Kimiti Ole Rerente. Though he has never been to school, he has memorized great portions of Scripture. He preaches in villages all around him. He teaches children. He has won his entire family to Christ. He assists the missionaries who serve among his people. He has found the good news of Christ too good to keep. One thing more must be said about him. He is blind!

King Solomon was the unlikely name of a slave in Lexington, Kentucky. An old friend, whom all her friends called Aunt Charlotte, purchased Solomon at an auction and set him free. An epidemic of cholera struck the city and Aunt Charlotte urged King Solomon to leave. But he stayed to care for the sick and to bury the dead. He stayed at the risk of his own life. King Solomon was white! The Aunt Charlotte who set him free was black!

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was interviewed near the close of his life. This is what he said: "God had all there was of me. There have been others who had greater plans, greater opportunities than I; but from the day I got a vision of what God could do, I made up my mind God would have all there was of William Booth."

Goethe said we should strive for the highest good. Jesus said we should strive for the lowest service.

Yoon Kwon Chae said that he knew a Korean Christian, a physician, who had gotten older and was not physically strong. When someone called for an appointment, he would ask, "Do you have money?" If they said yes, he would say, "Please go to other doctors. I am too weak to take care of a patient who has money." If they said they had no money, he would see them at once.

At the end of World War I, Herbert Hoover, later to become President of the United States, led the allied relief efforts in Europe. He kept hundreds of thousands from starving, and a new word entered the Finnish language. In Finland, to hoover means to be kind, to help. If someone coined a word from your name, what would it be? Would it signify character? Helpfulness? Cheerfulness? Or would it be some mean and ugly word?

When Jesus told us to do our good deeds in secret, he did not have the same thing in mind that Charles Lamb did when he wrote, "The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good action by stealth and to have it found out by accident."

Once a man cut off his thumb with a saw. Later he cut off his forefinger, but he saved it and the doctor thought he could sew it back on. "Can you put it where my thumb was?" he asked. The doctor thought he could. The man explained that with a forefinger for a thumb he could grasp small objects. It was done successfully. There are some tasks that only a thumb can accomplish, and some that only a fingernail can accomplish. So Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12 that every member of the body is necessary.

In a humorous twist, Joseph Addison wrote in *The Spectator*: "We are always doing, says he, something for Posterity, but I would fain see Posterity do something for us." Posterity does do something for us. It gives us a sense of perspective. It tells us that investments in service can outlast us. It tells us the shadow of service can be longer than the life itself.

(Source of above illustrations - [1000 Windows - Robert Shannon](#))

## Mark 11

### Mark 11:17

#### The House of Prayer

Thy mansion is the Christian's heart,  
O Lord, Thy dwelling-place secure!  
Bid the unruly throng depart,  
And leave the consecrated door.

Devoted as it is to Thee,  
A thievish swarm frequents the place;  
They steal away my joys from me,  
And rob my Saviour of His praise.

There, too, a sharp designing trade  
Sin, Satan, and the World maintain;  
Nor cease to press me, and persuade

To part with ease, and purchase pain.

I know them, and I hate their din;  
Am weary of the bustling crowd;  
But while their voice is heard within,  
I cannot serve Thee as I would.

Oh! for the joy Thy presence gives,  
What peace shall reign when Thou art there;  
Thy presence makes this den of thieves  
A calm delightful house of prayer.

And if Thou make Thy temple shine,  
Yet, self-abased, will I adore:  
The gold and silver are not mine;  
I give Thee what was Thine before.

Olney Hymns, by William Cowper  
Cowper's Poems, Sheldon & Company, New York ([Bible.org](http://Bible.org))

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**Mark 11:22** Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

The margin of the a.v. suggests that this command might be rendered, Have the faith of God. As long as I live I shall remember this text in connection with my first meeting with Hudson Taylor. He was to preach for me on a Sunday morning, now years ago, and gave out this as his text. But he said that he had always interpreted it as dealing rather with God's faith to us than ours to Him; so that it ran thus: Reckon on God's faithfulness.

1. We must be sure that we are on God's plan. — There is a prepared path for us, along which God has stored up all necessary supplies. But if we want those supplies, we must find and follow it. Along the track which he has marked out between this and Home, our Father has erected cairns full of provisions; but we must let his route prevail over our own notions and wishes, if we are to enjoy his preparations.

2. We must be prepared to wait on Him.—For these things He will be inquired of. Though He knows what we need, He expects our humble request, that we may be perpetually reminded of our entire dependence on Him. He sometimes appears to tarry, to draw out our faith and prayer. But He will never utterly fail.

3. We must walk worthily of Him.—God shows Himself strong only on behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him. By his enabling grace we must put away the old manner of life, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind, that we may be such whom the great God shall delight to honor. Let such trust Him to the hilt; they will find Him faithful. He will never put us into positions of peril and responsibility, and leave us to take our chance. - Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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### **Mark 11:22 - "The Faith of God"**

OUR Lord, in the presence of the withered fig tree, said to His disciples: "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). Really He said, "Have the faith of God." Then He went on to say, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Now here is a bona-fide promise in black and white, and if we actually believed these words, our lives would be revolutionized until we would almost need to be introduced to ourselves! What kind of faith is this?

It is God's faith, not ours. We cannot stir up mountain-moving faith. It is the same faith by which we believe unto salvation (Eph. 2:8). The faith by which we live is the faith of the Son of God, not merely faith in Him (Gal. 2:20). Yet the sinner must will to believe; when he does, God gives him faith to believe. This same faith he must now exercise, and it increases by exercises. And don't forget that it is nourished on the Word of God: "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). "Many of them which heard the word believed" (Acts 4:4).

This faith desires: "What things soever ye desire." Only those who hunger and thirst after righteousness really are filled, and only those who really desire great things from God ever get them. There is no real concern today, no burden to see mountains move!

God's faith forgives. Our Lord goes on to say in Mark 11:25-26 that we are to forgive, and that if we forgive not, our Father will not forgive. We can pray with confidence toward God only when our hearts condemn us not, and an unforgiving spirit does not make for



a conscience void of offense.

Then God's faith asks: "Every one that asketh receiveth." We are told to ask, seek, knock, which means progressive praying that moves on with importunity until it gets what it seeks. Here is no superficial sentence-praying, but real supplication and intercession.

God's faith wills. Jesus said to the Syrophenician woman, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28). When we are fully yielded to God, He works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). He wills through us the things that are in His will, and such things of course we receive.

God's faith commands: "Whosoever shall say, Be thou removed." God has told us to command Him concerning the work of His hands (Isa. 45:11). When we pray the prayer of faith we may come boldly, for we speak with the authority of another.

God's faith believes. Having asked and commanded, it believes it shall receive. Like Hannah, the believer goes away with his countenance no more sad, resting in the Lord. Like Abraham, he staggers not at the promise of God. God's faith never fails. We are plainly promised that we shall receive. God's faith will remove any mountain God wants moved. A life utterly yielded, fed on the Word, with sin confessed, seeking God's glory—in such a life God will plant a mighty faith that will move mountains. (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 11:17 My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.**

The Lord wants us to pray for all nations, and for kings and for all in authority. We can exercise knee-based influence over leaders whom we may never meet. Here's an example: Prince Edward VII of England was well known for his drinking and immorality. When his mother, Queen Victoria, died in 1901, Edward assumed the throne at age fifty-nine and reigned for nine years. In 1910, a prayer warrior named Joe Evans was vacationing in the New York mountains, away from newspapers and interruptions. One morning he felt a burden to intercede for Edward, and the burden became so intense he anguished in prayer for the king's conversion. The following day came the news, "Edward is dead." Years later, Joe shared dinner with Dr. J. Gregory Mantle of England. Dr. Mantle said, "Joe, did you know that Edward VII was saved on his deathbed?" He went on to explain: "The king was in France when he was taken ill. He was brought to England and there was hope that he might recover. However, there came a turn for the worse. At that time, His Majesty called one of his lords-in-waiting and ordered him to go to Paternoster Row and secure for him a copy of a tract that his mother, Queen Victoria, had given to him when he was a lad. It was entitled "The Sinner's Friend." After much searching, the lord-in-waiting found the tract, brought it to His Majesty, and upon reading it, King Edward VII made earnest repentance and received the Lord Jesus as his Savior." ([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

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### **Mark 11:12ff The Barren Fig Tree**

Many detractors of our Lord have pointed with glee to what on the surface seems like a fit of petty anger on Christ's part, spawned by His selfish appetite. In reality, it was probably unrealistic to expect figs at that time of year, a fact which He must have known quite well. Perhaps the key to the whole passage is in the fact that "His disciples heard it."

When we look at the surrounding passages, we see that Christ was using the barren fig tree to teach His disciples something they desperately needed to know. This might be called a living parable. Our Lord had just come from His triumphal entry into the city, having been proclaimed as King by the multitude (Mark 11:7-11), knowing their shallow adoration would soon turn into cries for His death. Leaving the fig tree, he drove the money changers from the temple grounds, having recognized that they were not only exploiting all the Jews who entered, but had taken over the court of the Gentiles, using it as a shortcut through town (Mark 11:16) and a place of business (Mark 11:15), thus denying the possibility of true worship to all, both Jews and Gentiles. The fig tree was an object lesson on barrenness, typifying the Jewish nation's condition in spite of their privileged heritage. This type of hypocritical fruitlessness receives condemnation (Mark 11:20-21), exhibits a lack of faith (Mark 11: 24-26), and hinders our prayers (Mark 11:24-26). - Source unknown ([Bible.org](#))

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### **Mark 11:23 - "Nothing Wavering"** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. James 1:6.

The man who lacks wisdom is promised it, but he must ask in faith and not be like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Our Lord said we could move mountains if we commanded them to move and did not doubt in our hearts (Mk. 11:23). The positive side of that is in the next verse, which says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Abraham "staggers not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith." There we have the negative and positive again (Rom. 4:20). Some are saved from sin but not from staggering.

"Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Positive and negative! Are you walking by faith or wobbling in doubt? "We lie to God in prayer when we do not rely on God after prayer." James is very clear: "Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord." Asking without believing marks a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (Vance Havner)

**"Nothing Wavering"** And shall not doubt in his heart. Mark 11:23. Doubting nothing. Acts 10:20. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. James 1:6. It is a powerful phrase, and the word shows up elsewhere (Mt. 21:21; Rom. 4:20; 14:23). A. T. Robertson

says, "It is a vivid picture of internal doubt." We must not only believe God, we must believe we believe God. Like the silly habit of going back to see whether you really did lock that door, an unsettled state of spiritual indecision is developed by doubting souls. They never "close the gate" behind them, they are forever reconsidering their decisions. They are never sure of their conversion or their consecration. They are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. When you have made any covenant with the Lord consider it final. If you did it honestly in the light you had you insult Him and your own intelligence by going over it all again. It becomes a vicious habit, and you can never be sure of anything. You never stand firmly on any point for fear you may be wrong. Close your gates behind you and move on, "nothing doubting," "for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." (Vance Havner)

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**Matthew 11:23 - Got Any Mountains?** Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Mark 11:23. Can we confidently claim and expect the conversion of our loved ones? Well, it must be in God's will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (Jn. 5:14). Does He will the conversion of every one? "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pt. 3:9). Then He will remove this mountain, but we must expect the mountain to move. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mt. 21:22). And the verse following our text says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." We pray hoping, but hoping is not faith. Faith takes God's word for the deed and in its geography lists the mountain as "disappeared." Got any mountains you think are unsinkable? (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 11:23 - Better Than Moving Mountains** - Mountains were once regarded as symbols of the steadfast and unmovable, but not any more. With his monster bulldozers, man can level peaks into plains. But, great as are his feats in moving the mountains of earth, he is not doing too well in the realm of the spirit. There he is playing with molehills.

Our Lord would have us see miracles in mountain-moving. He said: "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:23). Evidently our Lord expected believing prayer to do wonders. Moving a mountain is a mighty feat, any way you look at it.

We glory in what our machines can do but the church sits today before a range of obstacles and studies ways to tunnel through or climb over or detour around. It does not seem to occur to some of the brethren that there is another way to clear a path—by faith and prayer. Of course the collective body of believers fails because we fail as individuals. Have you come to a halt before a forbidding wall? Have you become reconciled to limitations that could be removed? Are you studying ways to circumvent the mountain when God says you can consign it to the sea? At any rate, we are trying to drill our way through by clever ingenuity or climb over by sheer determination or go around by dodging the issue. It is time for a miracle. One sits in religious gatherings and hears all kinds of clever schemes for moving mountains with ecclesiastical machinery. He hears little about going to our knees in prevailing prayer. We pay respect to prayer and coin pious phrases about faith, but the mountains are not moving. If only some of our convocations would turn in desperation to the Saviour's formula!

The history of the church abounds in records of mountain-movers who faced the impossible and ordered the mountain into the sea. They did not accomplish it with bulldozers. The weapons of their warfare were not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

Having said all this, let me remind you that, wonderful as moving mountains may be, it is not the supreme accomplishment. "... though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2). We Americans glory in the spectacular and sensational but there is something better than getting into headlines, even because of mighty faith. The greatest mountain-mover, without love, is nothing. Here is another scale of values. The manifestations of love outlined in 1 Corinthians 13 sound very homely: Love is longsuffering, kind, does not envy, is not proud; love behaves itself, is not easily provoked, not self-seeking, keeps no account of evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but in the truth; love bears all things, believes, hopes, endures all things. These are plain virtues the lowliest may practice in the home, the shop, at work or play. Love looks commonplace beside throwing mountains into the sea, but it rates high with God. One may do both of course, but we are suffering most today not so much from the presence of mountains that ought to be moved as from the absence of love that ought to be manifested. Our Saviour wrought miracles, but what means most to us today is His love. His love shed abroad in our hearts will mean more than all the mountains we move. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 11:24 - CARRY YOUR UMBRELLA!** And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matthew 21:22.

When it comes to praying in faith, most of us pray for rain but do not carry our umbrellas. We do not expect the answer according to Mark 11:24. One great Bible teacher was for a while perplexed by the grammar of that verse, "Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." But finally he stopped worrying about the grammar and believed God! The mountain moves when we ask in faith (Matthew 21:21). "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29).

Carry your umbrella! (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 11:24** - R. A. Torrey was troubled about the grammar of that verse for a while (Mark 11:24) . . . "Believe you have it and you will have it," but he decided to quit worrying about the grammar and started trusting the Word! (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 11:24 - "Believe that Ye Receive"** - "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24 - Here is one of our commonest failings. We confess our sins according to 1 John 1:9 but, instead of receiving his forgiveness and believing we have it, we commit another sin by worrying about it for weeks. We should thank him for forgiveness and, forgetting the things behind, press on. We overlook the tremendously important fact that failing to believe we have what God has promised and what faith has received is also a sin. Any disobedience of the command of our Lord is sin. He has commanded us to pray for things we need and then by faith receive them. Next he plainly commands us to "believe that ye have received them." Therefore, if we do not believe that we have received, we sin for all unbelief is sin. In the verse before our text our Lord said, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." Doubt is plain disobedience and disobedience is sin. So, beware of this snare of Satan; live believing and receiving and believing that you are receiving! (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 11:24 - Believe Your Beliefs** - What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11:24. Believe that you have and you shall have—that is the grammar of faith! We are to ask for wisdom but we must ask in faith, nothing wavering (James 1:6). The believer already has all things in Christ, and by faith he lays hold of what is already his. We must not only believe that we receive, we must believe that we believe. We must believe our beliefs and doubt our doubts. Alas, we doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts! To be always examining our faith is to destroy it. There is a strange twist of mind that afflicts some harassed souls who can never be sure of anything. These are ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. We must give ourselves credit for such faith as we can muster. The father of the demonized boy said to our Lord, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." His faith was weak and mixed with unbelief and he knew it, but he knew that he had at least a little faith and that faith he asserted. Of course, our faith, like every other good and perfect gift, is of God, but God expects us to use it, affirm it, not doubt it. "If thou canst believe" implies that we can if we will. God would not ask us to believe if we could not. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 11:24 - Shouting at Jericho** - Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city. Joshua 6:16.

The people shouted before the walls fell. Anybody can shout after they fall. Faith anticipates victory and celebrates in advance. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk. 11:24). "Believe that ye receive them"—the walls are as good as down already when God says so. Faith takes His word for the deed and shouts now. "The Lord hath given you the city." He has given us all things freely with the gift of His Son. We already have it in Christ, though we may not actually have possessed our possessions. Faith is the land deed for our inheritance with God's signature. Jericho may loom big and ominous, but if, like Joshua, you have had a meeting with the Captain of the Lord's host, fear not. "Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." Anticipate victory and shout in advance!

## Mark 12

### Mark 12:10

Have you not even read this Scripture? - Mark 12:10

Books! Books! Books! Hardcover and paperbacks. Reference works and jokebooks. Romantic novels and mysteries. Self-help books and religious publications. They just keep appearing -- and we keep buying them.

We also keep writing them. No wonder Solomon said, "Of making many books there is no end" (Ec 12:12). But one book supersedes all the others -- The Bible.

It is the Word of God, written by authors who were inspired by the Holy Spirit and kept from error (2Ti 3:16). It is God's truth, telling us what to believe and how to live. This Book should be required reading for everyone!

Jill Briscoe was addressing a convention of religious writers and editors. An author of several books and numerous articles, she was talking about what it means to have people read your words and be influenced by your writing. She called it a privilege and a

responsibility. Then Mrs. Briscoe made this provocative statement: "When we get to Heaven," she said, "we will not say to God, 'Did You read my book?' Rather, God will say to us, 'Did you read My Book?'"

How about it? Have you read His book today? -- D C Egner. [Our Daily Bread](#).

Our history is marked by the filling of books  
With what we have thought, said, and done;  
But one Book, the Bible, reveals the true way --  
It tells of the Savior, God's Son. -- JDB

**A well-read Bible is a sign of a well-fed soul.**

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**Mark 12:24 - Some Unanswered Questions** - The Scriptures leave many questions about the hereafter unanswered. Do children grow up in heaven? What about the saints with the Lord who do not yet have their resurrection bodies? What is a spiritual body? And of course through the ages bereaved hearts have asked, "Shall we know each other over there?"

Of course it has been said many times that surely we shall have as much sense there as we have here! The Sadducees asked our Lord about the woman who had been married seven times: whose wife would she be in the resurrection? He replied; "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God"? (Mark 12:24). When we know not God's Word nor His power we fall into all kinds of error. Error is grounded in ignorance. Jesus went on to say that in the resurrection we neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels. He was not covering the whole subject of our status in the hereafter and we can read too much into or out of these words. He simply said that angels do not marry and in this respect we shall be like the angels, for earthly relationships do not obtain in the hereafter.

This does not necessarily mean that we shall feel exactly the same way toward everybody, a stranger or our dearest loved one. I do not know how God will work it all out and I may be speculating, but I cannot feel that I will react just the same when I see my mother or wife over there as to somebody I never saw before. I know that we shall have new bodies and that old emotions will have been displaced by a new personality appropriate to our heavenly life. But I cannot think that there will be one general uniformity of thought and feeling with no degrees of delight as we meet again those we have loved long since and lost awhile. Our Father will grant us fullest joy, and I am not going to let the problem of one woman with seven husbands spoil my anticipation when I walk the golden streets with the one I loved above all others on earth.

Nor do I think that all the residents of that fair city will have the same capacity for enjoyment. The Scriptures teach that some will be beaten with few stripes and some with many and some shall rule over five cities and some over ten. By the same token I cannot believe that heaven will mean no more to faithful saints who walked close to God on earth than to some poor disciple who barely got into heaven saved as by fire with his life gone up in smoke.

Just how the Father will do it I do not know, but my joy will not be less there than here and it will be intensified, not toned down to one unvarying pattern. Even this poor world abounds in color and variety and my eternal home will be no monolithic set-up. I still feel that the dearest here will be dearer there in a way I could never know in this world. But I approach it with no trepidation. My Father knows how to do it and five seconds after I arrive all my questions will have disappeared in ecstasy as I take up my abode in the house of the Lord forever (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 12:33** The [Welsh Revival](#) of 1904 was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the churches and people of Wales that spread around the world and can be called the last great revival of global proportions. By some accounts it had its beginning in the village of New Quay, fifteen miles from the nearest railway station. The local pastor, Rev. Joseph Jenkins, had read Andrew Murray's book *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. He began pleading for an awakening in his own heart and in those of others. In that spirit, he assembled the young people of the village for a Sunday morning prayer service. When Jenkins asked for testimonies, a new convert named Florrie Evans stood and said with a tremor in her voice: "I love Jesus Christ—with all my heart." Those words struck the group like an electrical charge. It was later described as a fire igniting right in the room. Soon those young people, ages sixteen to eighteen, began traveling through Wales as the human conveyers of a burning revival that brought an estimated one hundred thousand people into the kingdom. One young man, Evan Roberts, became the primary vehicle of revival; but the revival spark was provided by young Florrie Evans. And if we would say her words as earnestly as she said them that day, we'd all have a bit of the Welsh revival in us. "I love Jesus Christ—with all my heart." ([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

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**Mark 12:34 - Almost to Jesus**

TO the scribe who spoke well the heart of the Law, Jesus said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34). But one may almost reach salvation and still be lost. A soldier, after going through the war in France, was killed in a wreck when he had almost reached his home in America. Almost, but lost! Some get as far as the church. The father brought his demonized boy to the disciples but they could not heal him. Then Jesus came and said, "Bring him to Me" (Matt. 17:14-21). Today a powerless church stands before needy souls, and all too often it must be said of us disciples, "And they could not." We can do no mighty works

because of unbelief. And men lambaste the church and talk of the mistakes and failures of the church. But back of the church stands the Lord saying, "Bring him to Me. I have not failed. The church cannot save. You must get through to Me." To be sure, this does not excuse the weakness of the church. Such power comes only by prayer and fasting and the church will not fast and pray today. But men need to know that it is not enough to get as far as the church and into the church. Press through to Jesus!

Some get as far as the Bible. "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life" (John 5:39-40). One may study the Bible in an academic way and never know its Christ. This scribe we started with knew his Scripture but not the Lord. To be an expert in a biography is not to know the subject of the biography. And greater is the condemnation if we know the Bible and know not Christ. The heathen has not that condemnation. To read travel folders is not to travel! All roads in the book lead to Christ; but do you travel the road?

Some get as far as doctrine. At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again." She said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Martha was orthodox; she was correct in her doctrine, a good fundamentalist. But our Lord changed the emphasis from the doctrinal to the person: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" He made the resurrection not something to believe but someone to believe, and it brought personal confession from Martha: "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." One may know doctrine and not know Him. It is not he that believes in the resurrection but he that believes in Him who rose who is saved.

Certainly one who comes to Him will belong to the church, read the Bible and believe doctrine. But back of all these stands Christ Himself. The devil will have men join the church and become theologically orthodox if only they do not touch Christ. And one may come almost to Christ! Jostle Him in the crowd but never touch Him and feel His virtue: this is almost. Be sure you get through to Jesus! (Vance Havner)

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## Mark 12:44

THE Lord Jesus was sitting in the temple watching people put their money into the treasury. The rich dropped in large amounts, making the bucket resound with the clang of their coins. Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two tiny copper coins worth less than a penny. They made only a slight tinkling sound, impressing no one—except Jesus. He called His disciples to Him and said that she had given more than the rest, for she had given "her whole livelihood."

Speaking of this incident, missionary Paul Beals made a distinction between **contributions** and **sacrifices**. The wealthy people, he explained, were making contributions, but the widow was making a sacrifice, for she was giving "out of her poverty." Then he paused and said quietly, "I don't know if my wife and I have ever given sacrificially. Oh, we thought we were. Once we even took some money out of savings to give to a special project. But it didn't jeopardize our livelihood. I guess I have to say we really don't know what it means to give sacrificially. We've been making contributions." Our Daily Bread

I appreciate Beals's distinction and admire his honesty.

When it comes to giving, a good principle to remember is this:

While humans are impressed by how much we give,

God is impressed by how little we keep for ourselves. —D C Egnor

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## Mark 12:27

He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.

Since God spoke of Himself as the God of the patriarchs, centuries after they had been borne to their graves, it stood to reason that they were yet living; and on this ground our Lord met the allegation that there is no life beyond death.

Death is not a state or condition, but an act. — We speak of the dead; but in point of fact there are none such. We should speak of those who have died. They were living up to the moment of death; but they were living quite as much afterwards. Death is like birth, an act, a transition, a passage into a freer life. Never think of a death as a state, but as resembling a bridge which, for a moment, casts its shadow on the express train, which flashes beneath, but does not stay.

All our dear ones are living. — As vividly, as keenly, as intensely as ever: with all the love and faith and intelligence with which we were wont to associate their beloved personality. It may be that they think of us as only half alive, compared with their own intense and vivid experience of the life which draws its breath from the manifested presence of God. Oh, do not fear that they will cease to recognize, know, or love you! Always it remains true, "Without us they cannot be made perfect."

Those who live on either side of death may meet in God. — Those who are present in the body, and those who are absent from it,

meet in proportion as they approach God. When we count near Him in thought, and prayer, and love, we are come to the spirits of the just made perfect. God is the glorious center of all the lines that radiate into all worlds. "Ye are come to God, the Judge of all, ... and to the spirits of the just made perfect." Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 12:34 - So Near and Yet So Far** - John Bunyan in Pilgrim's Progress perceived that "there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven." Jesus said to a scribe who had agreed with the two greatest commandments, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34). But a miss is as bad as a mile. One may know the Scriptures and yet not know Jesus. He said in essence, "You search the Scriptures but you will not come unto me." One may be as near as sound doctrine and miss Jesus. Martha believed in the resurrection, but she needed to move from the doctrinal to the personal. "I am the life," Jesus told her (John 11:25). One may call Him Lord and say one day, "We have prophesied and cast out demons in your name," only to hear Him say, "Depart, you workers of iniquity; I never knew you" (cf. Matt. 7:22, 23). One may be an enquirer, as was the rich young ruler, and never be a disciple. Some are confused when they hear all this and then read that some of Jesus' disciples failed miserably, even to forsaking Him for the moment. Simon Peter was a disgrace to the cause he espoused on several occasions, but he had the root of the matter in him and loved his Lord. Old Mister Fearing in Pilgrim's Progress lived his life afraid he wouldn't get to heaven, but he got there anyway, because deep inside he trusted—though with a feeble faith.

It takes more than close proximity to the Lord to save us. Near is not close enough. Only simple faith, as of a little child, can save us. (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 12:44 Tithing** - I've read stories about prisoners in concentration camps, death camps, and POW camps who were given scraps of bread and watery bowls of soup, and that's all they had. But they found a way of tithing from it. One man took a tenth of his bread every day and gave it to a fellow prisoner, and another man fasted every tenth day and gave his full meal on that day to someone else. The principle of the Bible is proportional giving—this passage says that we are to give "as God has prospered us." (Robert J Morgan - Donelson Fellowship)

## Mark 13

### Mark 13:35

Ye know not when the lord of the house cometh. (r.v.)

No, we know not. It is better that we should not know. But He must be very near. Even has past: the beams of his presence had just died off the world, and the after-glow was still lingering in the ministry of the apostles in the early Church. Midnight has past; it reached its deepest darkness in the middle ages, when only a few holy souls shone like stars in the surrounding gloom. Cock-crow has past; Wickliffe and Luther, and others, heralded the morning. And now the morning is upon us; nay, it is shining more and more unto the perfect day. He must be near, even at the doors. Be ready, O virgin souls, to go forth to meet Him!

But may not these words be interpreted in yet another way? Jesus comes to us in the evening twilight, when the joy of our life seems slowly waning. He comes to us in the deep night of depression, bereavement, and anguish. He comes to us in the hope and expectancy of each new dawn, when we gird ourselves to fresh toils and endeavors. He comes to us in the morning, and satisfies us with his mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all the day. Only let us watch for his coming, with ears attent to his lightest footfall, his softest whisper. Then, when He shows Himself through the lattice, or softly whispers, "Come away," we shall arise and go forth with Him to the beds of lilies and the gardens of myrrh.

Are we quite sure that we belong to his house? "Whose house are we," says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But there are conditions: we must be born into it by regeneration; we must walk as becometh saints; we must hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Christ is Lord over this house, and his will is law (Hebrew 3:1-9).

Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 13:10** When we moved into our house on Pennington Bend eighteen years ago, our little girls found small maple tree seedlings growing in the pots and flower beds. Like a mighty commander-in-chief, a maple tree somewhere in our neighborhood had sent its air force of miniature helicopters across our lawn, and as a result we had little maple sprouts coming up everywhere. Our girls potted and repotted some of them, and by and by they were large enough for planting. Today we have a beautiful grove of maples towering over our back deck. And every spring, they send thousands of little helicopters flying across our lawn. I find scores of tiny little maple trees coming up in all my pots and flowerbeds. The Lord placed within those trees an enormous and urgent drive



to reproduce, and they prolifically scatter their seeds to the four winds.

We, too, are here on this earth to scatter prolifically the gospel seed to the four winds. We've got a message to share with the neighbors and with the nations—to all people and to all countries. We share Christ in attitude, letting others see our joy. We share Him in action, letting others see our lives. But we must also share Him assertively, specifically telling someone else the Good News that Jesus Saves. And when we've finished our task, then He'll return. ([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

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## Mark 13:13

January 11 "Watch and pray."- Mark 13:33

**J. C. Philpot. Daily Portions** - There is no keeping up FAITH except by prayer and watchfulness. As prayer declines in the bosom, so does the strength of faith. You may go on neglecting prayer and supplication until every grain of faith seems lost from your bosom, and may come at last to do you think never knew anything of a work of God upon your heart, and have been deceived in believing there was any grace there.

By watchfulness also is the LOVE of God maintained. Unless you watch against your besetting sins, against the snares spread for your feet, against the temptations that daily and hourly beset your path, against being overcome by the strength or subtlety of your unwearied foe, you are sure to fall; and if you fall you will bring guilt and bondage, darkness and distress into your mind, and cut off for a time all friendly communion with God.

Therefore you must pray and watch; for without watchfulness, prayer is of little efficacy. And if we neglect the Scriptures, or read them carelessly or unbelievably, they will do us little good. They must be read with believing eyes and heart, received as the revelation of God, and must be mixed with faith, or assuredly they will not profit us (He 4:2).

The life of God is a very deep, secret, and sacred thing in the soul. God, it is true, will maintain it; he will not leave his work unaccomplished; but unless we read and pray, watch and meditate, wage war against besetting sins, and seek the Lord's face continually, we shall find the strength and power of faith very sensibly decline; and if so, there is no comfortable walking with God - J. C. Philpot. Daily Portions

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**Mark 13:37 - WAITING AND WATCHING** And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. Mark 13:37.

We are all waiting for the Lord's return. We have to wait since we cannot hurry it up. But waiting is not watching. Some say, "I am not interested in prophecy. Nobody knows the time and all we can do is to be ready." But the early Christians were not only ready, they lived in expectancy. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord will find not only ready but watching. His eyes are on the Eastern skies—more ways than one!—for his redemption draws nigh. I am concerned about those who say nonchalantly, "Oh, of course I believe the Lord is coming back." It is not a matter of course! We are to be busy and occupy ourselves till He comes, but we labor in joyful anticipation. We not only wait, we watch! (Vance Havner)

## Mark 14

### Mark 14:6

But Jesus said, Let her alone.

The lovers of Jesus are often misunderstood. Those who judge only by a utilitarian standard refuse to acknowledge the worth of their deeds. You might as well despise the electric light because it makes no register on a gas-meter. But when the voices of criticism and jealousy are highest, Jesus steps in and casts the shield of his love around the trembling, disconcerted soul, saying, Let him alone. So He speaks still:—

To Satan. — The adversary stands near to resist and tempt. As Judas criticised Mary, so the Evil One seems at times to pour a perpetual stream of chilling criticism on all we say and do; or he meets us at every turn with some evil suggestion. But Jesus is on the watch, and He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear; but when heart and flesh fail, He will step in and say, Let him (or her) alone.

To sorrow. — We must pass through the fire, and be subjected to the lapidary's wheel; we must drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism; we must bear our cross after Him. But He is always on the alert. And whenever the feeble flesh is at an end of its power of endurance, He will step in and say, Let be — it is enough.

To human unkindness. — Some of us are called to suffer most from our fellows; our foes belong to our own household; our brother



Cain hates us. It is hard to bear. To have one's motives misunderstood and maligned; to lose one's good name; to be an outcast — all this is hard. But God has planted a hedge about us, and none may pass through it, except He permit. Even Satan recognizes this, as we learn from the Book of Job. Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily.

**Mark 14:3-9 It's Beautiful!** - Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me." —Mark 14:6

After being away on business, Terry wanted to pick up some small gifts for his children. The clerk at the airport gift shop recommended a number of costly items. "I don't have that much money with me," he said. "I need something less expensive." The clerk tried to make him feel that he was being cheap. But Terry knew his children would be happy with whatever he gave them, because it came from a heart of love. And he was right—they loved the gifts he brought them.

During Jesus' last visit to the town of Bethany, Mary wanted to show her love for Him (Mark 14:3-9). So she brought "an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard" and anointed Him (v.3). The disciples asked angrily, "Why this waste?" (Matt. 26:8). Jesus told them to stop troubling her, for "she has done a good work for Me" (Mark 14:6). Another translation reads, "She has done a beautiful thing to Me." Jesus delighted in her gift, for it came from a heart of love. Even anointing Him for burial was beautiful!

What would you like to give to Jesus to show your love? Your time, talent, treasure? It doesn't matter if it's costly or inexpensive, whether others understand or criticize. Whatever is given from a heart of love is beautiful to Him.

Nothing I could give You, Father, could repay You for Your sacrifice. But I want to give You what You would think is beautiful. I give You my heart today in thankfulness for Your love. By [Anne Cetas](#)

A healthy heart beats with love for Jesus.

INSIGHT: The account of the woman who anointed Jesus with oil is preceded by the Pharisees' plot to kill Him (14:1-2) and is followed by Judas agreeing to betray Him (vv. 10-12). The events relating to those who plotted to kill Jesus are given only brief and cursory treatment (two verses each), while the account of the woman who anointed Jesus with perfume is given a full and detailed description (seven verses). Clearly this woman's actions will be remembered (v. 9).

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**Mark 14:32–42 Watch and Pray** - Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. Mark 14:38

From my window I can see a 1,700-meter hill called the Cerro del Borrego "Hill of the Sheep." In 1862, the French army invaded Mexico. While the enemy camped in the central park of Orizaba, the Mexican army established its position at the top of the hill. However, the Mexican general neglected to guard access to the top. While the Mexican troops were sleeping, the French attacked and killed 2,000 of them.

This reminds me of another hill, the Mount of Olives, and the garden at its foot where a group of disciples fell asleep. Jesus rebuked them, saying, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38).

Lord, help me to watch and pray today for myself and for others.

How easy it is to sleep or become careless in our Christian walk. Temptation strikes when we are most vulnerable. When we neglect certain areas of our spiritual lives—such as prayer and Bible study—we become drowsy and let our guard down, making us easy targets for our enemy, Satan, to strike (1 Peter 5:8).

We need to be alert to the possibilities of an attack and pray to maintain vigilance. If we remain watchful and pray—for ourselves and for others—the Spirit will enable us to resist temptation.

Lord Jesus, I know my spirit is willing, but my body is weak. Help me to watch and pray today for myself and for others.

Satan is powerless against the power of Christ.

**INSIGHT:** The garden of Gethsemane was the starting point of the sufferings of Christ, and it could not have been more appropriately named. In Aramaic, the word Gethsemanemeans "olive press." In olive tree orchards, it was normal to have a press where the harvested olives would be placed so that a heavy stone could be rolled over them—crushing the olives and removing the valuable oil from the fruit. That imagery precisely describes what Christ would undergo in His own "olive press." Imagine the sinless Son loaded down with the weight of all the sins of the entire world from all the ages! By [Keila Ochoa](#)

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**Mark 14:32-42** And He said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." If you're perplexed by the mystery of unanswered prayer, you're in good company. Some earnest prayers in

the Bible were left unanswered or were answered with a "No." Remember Abraham's plea that Ishmael become the son of promise (Gen. 17:18), Elijah's prayer for death (1 Kings 19:4), or Paul's thrice-offered plea for healing from a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:8). The greatest "unanswered" prayer in Scripture is the one Jesus offered in Gethsemane. He began by acknowledging that the heavenly Father has the power to do whatever He wishes: "All things are possible for You." Then came His poignant request: "Take this cup away from Me." But Jesus was willing for the Father to say no to His entreaty: "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." When the Lord answers our earnest request with a no, it's because He has a wiser plan, a broader perspective, and a higher aim for our good.

In one of her lesser-known hymns, Fanny Crosby wrote of this:

God does not give me all I ask,  
Nor answer as I pray;  
But, O, my cup is brimming o'er  
With blessings day by day.  
How oft the joy I thought withheld  
Delights my longing eyes,  
And so I thank Him from my heart  
For what His love denies.

([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

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### **Mark 14:3–9 She Did What She Could** - She did what she could. Mark 14:8

When her friends say thoughtless or outrageous things on social media, Charlotte chimes in with gentle but firm dissent. She respects the dignity of everyone, and her words are unfailingly positive. A few years ago she became Facebook friends with a man who harbored anger toward Christians. He appreciated Charlotte's rare honesty and grace. Over time his hostility melted. Then Charlotte suffered a bad fall. Now housebound, she fretted over what she could do. About that time her Facebook friend died and then this message arrived from his sister: "[Because of your witness] I know he's now experiencing God's complete and abiding love for him." How can you show God's love to others today? During the week in which Christ would be killed, Mary of Bethany anointed Him with expensive perfume (John 12:3; Mark 14:3). Some of those present were appalled, but Jesus applauded her. "She has done a beautiful thing to me," He said. "She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial" (Mark 14:6–8). "She did what she could." Christ's words take the pressure off. Our world is full of broken, hurting people. But we don't have to worry about what we can't do. Charlotte did what she could. So can we. The rest is in His capable hands. Lord, help us not to define our self-worth by what we do for You, but by what You have done for us. Show us how we can show Your love to others.

For further study, read [Being Jesus Online](#) at [discoveryseries.org/q0737](http://discoveryseries.org/q0737).

Do thy duty, that is best; leave unto the Lord the rest. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

**INSIGHT:** Bethany, the location featured in today's article, was a village on the slopes of the Mount of Olives less than two miles from Jerusalem. Pilgrims traveling from Jericho to Jerusalem, a journey of twenty-four kilometers or about fifteen miles, would pass through Bethany. Three famous siblings resided there: Lazarus, Martha, and Mary (John 11:1–2). Early in Jesus's ministry, Martha opened her home in Bethany to Him (Luke 10:38). Jesus would stay there whenever he was in Jerusalem to teach or to celebrate the Passover. During the Passion Week, Jesus spent His last few nights—probably Palm Sunday to Wednesday—with the three siblings (Matt. 21:17; Mark 11:11, 19). By Tim Gustafson

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### **Mark 14:3-9 Five Brooms - Do You Give to Jesus Like this Woman?**

There was a man in a particular church, who opened a broom closet and found five brand new brooms. He hit the ceiling. He went to the one in charge of buying commodities for the church. And he said, "Whoever authorized the buying of five brand new brooms at one time? We're not even meeting our budget!

That's a waste of money!" And he was very angry. The man couldn't satisfy him, and finally, the man was in to the pastor's office to see the pastor. The pastor tried to pacify him. And the pastor said, "Well, I don't know. Maybe we use a lot of brooms! Maybe there was a sale on brooms. But don't fall out of fellowship over it." But the man never was satisfied, and he left the pastor's office in a huff!

After awhile, the pastor was having coffee with the church treasurer, and the pastor told the church treasurer about this. The church treasurer just smiled. And, "Ah," he said, "Pastor, I can understand that." He said, "That's easy for me to understand why he was so upset." Well, the pastor said, "Would you please explain it to me?" And the treasurer said to the pastor, "Well, how would you feel if you saw everything you had given to the church in the past year tied up in five brooms?"

Note the comment by Judas in John 12:4-6 that relates to Mark 14:3-9 and introduces the following illustration...I like the story of the young man whose habit of criticizing backfired on him. One evening, while waiting for a bus, he was standing with a crowd of people looking in the window of a taxidermist shop. In the center of the window was a large owl that attracted the attention of all who passed by. The self-appointed expert began to criticize the job done on it. "If I couldn't do better than that," he said pompously, "I'd find another business. Just look at it. The head is out of proportion, the pose of the body is unnatural, and the feet are pointed in the wrong direction." Just then the owl turned his head and gave the fellow a broad wink. The crowd laughed as the critic slicked away.

**Illustration (From a sermon by Adrian Rodgers)** Children were bringing to Sunday School class show and tell items. One boy brought some water, and that illustrated, "I'm the Water of Life." The other brought some flowers, and that illustrated, "Jesus was the Rose of Sharon." And somebody else brought some bread, and "Jesus is the Bread of Life." A little boy brought a banty egg. (I know you know what a banty hen is?) He brought one of those little eggs, and the teacher said, "What does that represent?" The little fellow said, "She hath done what she could."

**ALABASTER** (al'-a-bas-ter) (alabastron <Mt 26:7; Mk 14:3; Lk 7:37>): In modern mineralogy alabaster is crystalline gypsum or sulphate of lime. The Greek word alabastron or alabastos meant a stone casket or vase, and alabastites was used for the stone of which the casket was made. This stone was usually crystalline stalagmitic rock or carbonate of lime, now often called oriental alabaster, to distinguish it from gypsum. The word occurs in the Bible only in the three passages of the Synoptic Gospels cited above.

**Wikipedia** has descriptions of [Alabaster stone](#)

**Illustration of this woman's love** - A famous king, depressed by circumstances in his realm and feeling rejected by many of his subjects, called for his three daughters to comfort and reassure him. After they had talked awhile, he asked how much they loved him.

Two of them answered that they cared for him more than all the gold and silver in the world; but Mary, the youngest, said she loved him like salt. The king wasn't pleased with her answer, for he considered salt to be of very little value. The cook, who overheard the conversation, knew that the child's reply had more significance than the father imagined. She dared not speak to the monarch about the matter, but devised a subtle way to emphasize the true meaning of the young girl's words.

The next morning at breakfast she withheld the salt from everything she served, and the meal was so insipid that the king didn't enjoy it at all. Then he realized the full force of his daughter's remark. She loved him so much that nothing was good without him! With a smile he said, "I understand now, Mary. Your love is the greatest of all!"

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**Mark 14:36 - DOTTED LINE** Not what I will, but what thou wilt. Mark 14:36. We draw up our little programs and ask God to sign on the dotted line, to endorse, and to bless our plans. We arrange meetings and set up the order of service, then in a set prayer we ask God to set His approval on everything. Should we not rather ask God to set up the program, plan the proceedings, while we sign on the dotted line? True, we must plan ahead, but do we ask God for the plan? We wait until the structure is finished, then "dedicate" it, invoking the divine blessing. Did we begin it by asking God for the blueprints? (Vance Havner)

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## Mark 14:38

**"Watch** and **pray** (both verbs in **present imperative** - command for continual vigilance and dependence, because we are all constantly one choice, one decision, one step from the snare of sin!), lest you enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38).

When we recognize the ugliness of temptations, we will be better able to resist them. Someone wrote,

"If only I could see **my** temptations as I see **other** people's, they wouldn't be a bit hard to fight. Other people's temptations look so ugly and foolish. But my own temptations come with a rosy light about them so that I don't see how hateful they are until afterward. There are two ways to see temptations in their true colors. One is to pray about them and thus bring them into the clear light of God's presence. The other is to say, 'How would this look if someone else yielded to it?'"

To the one being tempted, enticement to sin may be appealing. But if we yield, we start down a path of self-destruction.

In Matthew 4, the first temptation Satan presented to Christ seemed harmless. He tempted Jesus to satisfy His hunger (Mt 4:3, 4). Then he posed another concerning God's protection Mt 4:5,6, 7). In the third, he openly requested Christ to worship him (Mt 4:8, 9, 10). But the Savior saw Satan's true intent—to divert Him from going to Calvary and thus prevent Him from paying sin's penalty. Christ met every appeal by quoting the Scriptures. Jesus was saying to Satan,

**"I am living under the authority of My Father and His Word."**

If we know God's Word, which is the sword of the Spirit (Ep 6:17-note), and understand how to wield it, we too can be victorious over Satan. To resist temptation, we must be strong in the Lord (Ep 6:10-note), filled with His Spirit (Ep 5:18-note), and quick to recognize the ugliness of sin. —R. W. De Haan. Our Daily Bread

**If you want to master temptation,  
let Christ master you.**

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**Mark 14:64** Holocaust survivor [Elie Wiesel](#) tells of being singled out for punishment one day in the Nazi death camp. He was a teenager at the time, and he'd inadvertently stumbled onto an officer taking advantage of a woman in a back room of a warehouse. Shortly thereafter, the officer, enraged at being caught, assembled the prisoners, including Wiesel and his father, and a wave of dread swept over the group.

Wiesel felt sweat running down his back as his number was called. As he stepped forward, a crate was pulled into place and the boy was ordered to lie across it to be whipped. The pain was indescribable, and the beating left him barely conscious. But Wiesel later said that one person suffered more than he did—his father, standing among the prisoners, helplessly watching, unable to do anything to save or spare his son.

It amazes us that all the leaders of Israel condemned their Messiah to death, but there's a greater mystery to Calvary: the silence of the Father Himself, who willingly stood aside and watched His Son being scourged and crucified, even as Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46).

Not even in heaven will we fully understand the wonder of the cross, but this we know assuredly: it's by His blood that we are saved and by His stripes that we are healed.

Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee,  
From death's dread sting Thy servants free,  
That we may live, and sing to Thee: Alleluia!  
—Twelfth-century hymn

[\(My All in All - Robert J Morgan\)](#)

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Mark 14:47 - Fanaticism consists of redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim. —George Santayana

## Mark 15

### **Mark 15:3** THE "LAMB-LIFE"

- ... accused . . . he answered nothing. Mark 15:3
- ... as a sheep ... dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Isaiah 53:7

Recently I was blessed and convicted in my own soul by the penetrating comments of Mrs. Penn-Lewis, on these and other verses dealing with the amazing silences of Jesus. She began by calling attention to the fact that the "lamb-life" is characterized by silence! That is, the sanctified Christian who is living close to his God will manifest humility and supreme self-control under the most adverse and trying circumstances. Says Mrs. Lewis: "We will be silent in our lowly service among others, not seeking to be 'seen of men.' Silent over the glory of the hours on the mount lest others think of us above that which they ought. Silent while we stoop to serve the very ones who betrayed us. Silent when forced by others to some position where apparent rivalry with another much-used servant of God seems imminent, only to be hushed by utter self-effacement in our silent withdrawal without explanation, irrespective of our 'rights.' Silent when our words are misquoted."

After additional suggestions on the silences of consecration and humility, Mrs. Lewis concludes her article with this impassioned prayer: "O Thou anointed Christ, the Lamb of God, Thou alone canst live this life of silent self-effacement in a world of self-assertion and self-love. Live Thou this life in me!"

Are you set on always "getting your rights"? Will you argue for hours to make others understand your "reasonable position"? Then you still have much to learn from the silences of Jesus! Oh, may it be said of us as it is of that blessed company in Revelation 14: "These are they who follow the Lamb wherever he goeth" (Rev. 14:4)!

"Hold Thou my tongue" — for oh, I cannot guard it, Unless Thou teach me to control each word.

Guard Thou my thoughts, lest haply I should whisper Something to grieve my Savior and my Lord!— Gladys Roberts

Though the human tongue weighs practically nothing, it is surprising how few persons are able to hold it!—Wm. A. Ward. (From Our Daily Bread)

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### Mark 15:1-15 MAJORITY PRESSURE

Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus ... to be crucified. - Mark 15:15 - Politicians sometimes decide issues on the basis of majority pressure rather than on the principle of right and wrong. Some time ago a state governor declared that he personally believes abortion is wrong. But he said that as a public official he would support the will of the majority.

Pilate acted in much the same way regarding Jesus. Although he knew there was no truth to the charges leveled against Christ, he caved in to the pressure of the crowd. Consequently his name is recorded in infamy.

Few of us are in the position of appointed and elected officials who must please the majority to keep their jobs. Yet we are subject to the same kind of pressure. A Christian college student told me that one day he was driving three companions home after a football game. They wanted to stop at a bar known for indecent activities, but he didn't want to. The three students came from good homes and were popular at college. He wanted to please them, and he felt tremendous pressure to go against his conscience. For a moment he hesitated, but with the Lord's help he resisted the temptation and drove instead to a family restaurant.

Lord, help us to resist majority pressure when it would lead us down the path of sin. - H V Lugt [Our Daily Bread.](#))

If we do what's good and right,  
We must be true within;  
If we give in to what is wrong  
We dull our sense of sin.  
- Dennis J. De Haan

Unless we rely on God's power within us  
we will yield to the pressures around us.

(Ed: God's power within us = Holy Spirit - Are you being daily filled with His enabling power?)

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### Mark 15:34

My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

This was the darkest hour of the Savior's human life. Lover and friend stood away from Him; and those for whom his blood was being shed covered Him with contumely and abuse. Let us consider:—

His quotation of Scripture. — He is quoting Psalm 22:1, which is truly known as the Psalm of the Cross. It may be that He recited to Himself that wonderful elegy, in which David was to anticipate so minutely the sufferings of his Lord. What meaning there was for those dying lips in Psalm 22:7: "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn"; in Psalm 22:13: "They gape upon Me"; in Psalm 22:14: "All my bones are out of joint"; in Psalm 22:17: "I may tell all my bones"; or in Psalm 22:18: "They part my garments and cast lots." What sacred feet trod those well-worn steps!

His vicarious sufferings. — There is no possible way of understanding, or interpreting, these words, except by believing that He was suffering for sins not his own; that He was being made sin for us; that He was bearing away the sin of the world. It is not for a moment conceivable that the Father could have ever seemed to forsake his well-beloved Son, unless He had stood as the Representative of a guilty race, and during those hours of midday, midnight had become the propitiation for the sins of the world.

His perfect example of the way of Faith. — In doing the Father's will, He yielded up his life even to the death of the cross. But amid it all He said, "My God, my God." He still held to the Father with his two hands. And his faith conquered. The clouds broke; the clear heaven appeared; He died with a serene faith. "My God" was exchanged for "Father, into thy hands." Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**Mark 15:31 - The Divine Paradox** - WHILE Jesus hung upon the cross, the chief priests, mocking, said among themselves with the scribes, "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Mark 15:31).

In their scorn, they were declaring a truth greater than they knew. While they meant to belittle Him, the real truth of their statement is to His eternal glory. To save others He must give Himself: it is the stupendous heart of the atonement. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

In a lesser sense, and one applicable to you and me, it was also a fulfillment of Jesus' own paradox: "Whosoever will save his life

shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24). If Jesus had decided in Gethsemane to save His life, He would have lost it as our Savior: but in losing it, He truly saved it as our Redeemer.

Here is the application for us: In saving others, we cannot save ourselves. I speak of saving others in the sense of winning them to Christ and God. If we are to rescue others, we must expect to spend and be spent. So long as life revolves around self—self-advancement, self-promotion, self-satisfaction—we are wretched and miserable. If we are to save others, we must forget ourselves. When the family is sick, mother forgets herself in caring for others—and generally the Lord seems to keep mothers going in such times. In service, we Christians must lose ourselves with the spirit of Paul: "Neither count I my life dear unto myself" (Acts 20:24).

Then there is the other side of the paradox: In losing our lives to save others we most truly save ourselves. I am not here speaking of saving our souls; no good works can save the soul, but faith in Christ only. We can save our lives, our time, our talents as we spend them in saving others. The only time you ever save is the time you spend for others. The only money you ever save is the money you spend for others. It is the only certain investment in this gold-brick age. Paul has it in mind when he bids the Ephesians redeem the time. Jesus has it in mind when He says to lay up treasure in heaven. It is the principle of the parable of the unjust steward: use your earthly assets to make for yourself friends through service. Bread cast on the waters of service returns even if after many days.

How slow men are to learn that in saving life they lose it, but in losing it for Christ's sake they save it. Mind you, Jesus said, "Whosoever will lose his life for My sake"—not for one's own sake, not to be called a hero, not for consciences sake, but for Christ's sake. Mere idealistic service is not meant here. Often that is a price men offer for salvation.

This is a day of introverted living. We look at everything in the light of self: what it will profit us, where we can gain by this and that move. Christ turns life outward so that selfish Saul, proud of his legal righteousness, becomes a Paul who could wish himself accursed for his brethren's sake. Spend life and you save it; give it and you get it.

We do not save our lives while we save others, but because we save others. We often lose our money, our health, our temporal fortunes. But if we leave all for His sake, we shall be compensated in this world—and in the world to come, receive eternal life.

In saving others you cannot spare yourself. Yet in saving others you do most surely preserve yourself! All that you save is what you spend on others for His sake. (Vance Havner)

## Mark 16

### Mark 16:3 GOD WILL MOVE THE STONE

Who shall roll away the stone? Mark 16:3

The women who sought to anoint the dead body of Jesus are to be commended for their tender love and regard for the Savior. Yet as they came near the place of burial, the practical difficulty of moving the heavy stone which sealed His tomb brought them unnecessary anxiety of spirit. Actually it had already been moved, and so their fears were groundless. So, too, we are often needlessly concerned over prospective difficulties which He graciously removes or helps us overcome when we have to meet them. Let us therefore be encouraged to exercise greater faith in facing possible obstructions on the pathway of duty. We may be sure of the Lord's providential assistance in such matters when we advance in His name and for His glory!

An anonymous author has given additional practical admonitions concerning this text in Mark's gospel in the following poetic words: What poor weeping ones were saying nineteen hundred years ago, we, the same weak faith betraying, say in our sad hours of woe; looking at some trouble lying in the dark and dread unknown, we, too, often ask with sighing, "Who shall roll away the stone?" Many a storm-cloud hov'ring o'er us never pours on us its rain; many a grief we see before us never comes to cause us pain. Ofttimes, on the dread tomorrow sunshine comes, the cloud has flown! Why then ask in foolish sorrow, "Who shall roll away the stone?" Burden not thy soul with sadness, make a wiser, better choice; drink the wine of life with gladness, God doth bid thee, saint, rejoice! In today's bright sunlight basking, leave tomorrow's cares alone; spoil not present joys by asking: "Who shall roll away the stone?"

Christian, go forward today on the pathway of service undaunted by possible future obstacles! Let your heart be cheered by the thought that God will somehow "move the stone." - [Our Daily Bread](#)

Oft, before we've faced the trial,  
We have come with joy to own  
Angels have from Heav'n descended,  
And have rolled away "the stone"! —Anon.

Take courage: if God doesn't choose to remove an obstacle, He will help you plow around it!

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**Mark 16:3 - The Prevenient Angel** - "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (Mark 16:3).

Jesus had said He would rise on the third day, but here heartbroken women had come seeking the living among the dead. Like thousands of His disciples to this day they crossed the bridge before they reached it. They did not count on divine intervention and expected no angels. The grave had been secured by stone, seal, and soldiers. A heavenly visitor who not only rolled the stone away but sat on it in heavenly triumph may have seemed possible in their remotest thinking but not probable. How often in my pitiful doubts and fears have I met the inevitable in my nervous dread and never counted on the prevenient angel. Then when I reached the spot I had dreaded I was shamed again at the pitiful failure of my faith and could hear Jesus' "O ye of little faith, how long will it be ere ye believe me?" As a boy I used to look at the familiar picture of the guardian angel standing with a little child at the edge of a cliff. Theoretically and theologically I believed in heavenly helpers who minister to the heirs of salvation, but when a crisis arose my hopes of their intervention were slim. But now with the long look back over eight decades I know that I was often attended by prevenient angels though I knew them not. They arrived at my place of danger before I did. Stones and seals and soldiers mean nothing when a mighty angel comes down to roll the stone away. (Vance Havner)

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#### **Mark 16:3-4 - Angels Ahead**

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. Mark 16:3, 4.

Others, like Dr. Jowett, have caught the precious lesson of these verses. How often have we set out expecting trouble and dreading the difficulty ahead, to find upon arrival that God had "rolled away the stone"! Like the lepers in Samaria's gate, we venture forward, to find that God has scattered the enemy.

What "stone" lies ahead of you? You are wondering how you will get it rolled away, you lie awake all night making plans to remove tomorrow's obstacle. And how often have you reached the place appointed, to find that God had anticipated your dilemma.

Some stones we can roll away. "Take ye away the stone," commanded Jesus at Lazarus' grave. Some hindrances we can remove, and we must if the miracle is to follow. But the stone that is too big for us God's angel can handle.

Some saints in weakened condition wonder how it will be when they come to death. Fear not. The grave could not hold Jesus nor will it hold you. For Him the stone which enemies thought they had made sure would hold Him in the grave was turned into a throne of triumph with an angel sitting on it.

Do not walk in dread. God's angel will arrive at the dilemma first. Are you looking for stones ahead or angels ahead? (Vance Havner)

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#### **Mark 16:6 Resurrection - "And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him."**

Alfred Lord Tennyson expressed his belief in the resurrection in his poem, "Crossing the Bar." He gave instructions that it was to appear in every book of his poems that should ever be published, and always at the end of the book. He wanted all who read his works to see this assertion of faith in the face of death.

It is the lily, above all other flowers, that we associate with Easter. One particular lily, the lotus lily, seems to have a built-in immortality. Seeds from this lily that have lain dormant for a thousand years have been known to germinate and grow.

Ernest Renan said, "You Christians are living on the fragrance of an empty vase." He referred, of course, to the empty tomb. But the apostolic witnesses never appealed to the empty tomb as proof of the resurrection. They appealed to Christ's appearances, to the fact that he ate with them, and to his ever-present power. Rudolf Bultmann said that the disciples' believing led to their seeing. The book of Acts says that their seeing led to their believing.

When Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians about the resurrection, he chose the fable of the phoenix bird. The phoenix was an Arabian bird, the only one of its kind. It lived for one hundred years. When the time of death was near, it built a nest of spices, including frankincense and myrrh, entered the nest, and died. In the decay of its flesh a worm was produced, nourished by the dead body of the bird. The worm grew feathers and became strong enough to fly. It then carried the bones of its parent to Heliopolis in Egypt.

The bodies of the last Czar of Russia and his family were discovered in 1979, but the finder feared to tell of it until 1989. Everyone thought the bodies of the royal family had been destroyed by acid. The finder feared that the knowledge of the discovery would not be welcomed by the Communist government, so he kept quiet for ten years. In contrast, when the disciples found that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb, they immediately told everyone everywhere.

In Sir Thomas Malory's story "Le Morte d'Arthur," some people say that King Arthur is not dead and will come again to win the Holy Cross. Others say he is dead and on his tomb are these words: "Here Lies Arthur, Once and Future King." No inscription was put on the tomb of Jesus. He didn't stay there long enough. But he alone is the once and future King.

The most famous clock in the world is London's Big Ben. It stands by the Houses of Parliament and towers above Westminster



Abbey. It is a familiar landmark. The chimes play the tune of a hymn. The hymn is "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth."

The great Hungarian poet Sandor Petofi was killed in an abortive revolt in 1848. He is honored in Budapest's Petofi Bridge, in composer Franz Liszt's music, and in a legend that says he will rise again to help his nation in some future hour of need. Of course, no one takes the legend seriously, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ is taken seriously by millions.

In parts of Yugoslavia, it is still the custom to put food on the grave forty days after death. Sure enough, the food disappears! Local people call it the "gypsy cafeteria." We put flowers, not food. We no more imagine that the dead will smell the flowers than Yugoslavians imagine the dead will eat the food. We do it because we ourselves need to remember, need to be grateful, need some tangible expression of grief. But we are certain that some day the dead will rise, not to eat and drink as before, but to live eternally.

The Russian word for Sunday, voskresicnye, means resurrection. Every communist, every atheist, must speak of the resurrection when referring to the first day of the week!

As the bird with day's last gleam  
Wearily sings itself asleep;  
As it twitters in its dream,  
Ever fainter comes its peep.  
So my songs scarce reach the ear,  
Overtaken by my night.  
But the loud ones will burst clear,  
When it comes—another light.—Ernst Curtius

Dean Henry Aldrich (1647-1710) wrote: "What is lovely never dies, but passes into other loveliness, stardust, or seafoam, flower or winged air." Most of us are not satisfied with such nebulous ideas of immortality. The risen Christ, by contrast, appeared to his followers, talked with them, ate with them, and gave every indication that he was alive. It was not that he was alive in their memory, or alive in some poetic sense, or in some spiritual sense. He was truly alive, as alive as he had been before the cross.

In Armenia the national insignia is not the hammer and sickle so familiar all over the former U.S.S.R. but a flowering cross, symbolizing Christ's resurrection!

(Source of above illustrations - [1000 Windows - Robert Shannon](#))

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## Mark 16:15

**LET THE WHOLE WORLD HEAR!** - Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature - Mark 16:15

[Fritz Kreisler](#) (1875-1962), the world-famous violinist, earned a fortune with his concerts and compositions, but he generously gave most of it away. So, when he discovered an exquisite violin on one of his trips, he wasn't able to buy it.

Later, having raised enough money to meet the asking price, he returned to the seller, hoping to purchase that beautiful instrument. But to his great dismay it had been sold to a collector. Kreisler made his way to the new owner's home and offered to buy the violin. The collector said it had become his prized possession and he would not sell it. Keenly disappointed, Kreisler was about to leave when he had an idea. "Could I play the instrument once more before it is consigned to silence?" he asked. Permission was granted, and the great virtuoso filled the room with such heart-moving music that the collector's emotions were deeply stirred. "I have no right to keep that to myself," he exclaimed. "It's yours, Mr. Kreisler. Take it into the world, and let people hear it."

To sinners saved by grace, the gospel is like the rapturous harmonies of heaven. We have no right to keep it to ourselves. Jesus tells us to take it out into the world and let it be heard. - V C Grounds. Our Daily Bread. ([Bible.org](#))

I'll tell the world how Jesus saved me  
And how He gave me a life brand-new;  
And I know that if you trust Him  
That all He gave me He'll give to you. -Fox

**Someone told you about Christ.  
Have you told anyone lately?**

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## Mark 16:15

While speaking to the Radio Bible Class staff at a chapel service, John De Vries of Bibles For India told what might have happened when Jesus entered heaven immediately following His ascension.

The angels, rejoicing that Christ's mission on earth had been completed, gathered to welcome Him home. They were eager to know who would have the privilege of proclaiming to the world the good news that Christ had been born, had lived, had died, and had risen from the dead to provide salvation from sin. In fact, the angels were hoping they themselves would be given the honor. So they were greatly disappointed and amazed when Jesus looked down to earth and pointed to the tiny group of followers He had just left behind. "Those are the ones I want to be My witnesses," Jesus announced. "I have given to them the commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel. They have experienced the thrill and reality of redemption from sin; they are to be My messengers!"

The torch of the gospel, handed to those early followers of Christ, has been passed down through the generations until today it is in our hands. The responsibility of proclaiming that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is ours to fulfill.

Angels might long for the privilege of telling the world about Christ, but they have not experienced the joy of forgiveness and the hope of glory. That's why the task has been entrusted to us. —R. W. De Haan. Our Daily Bread.

**Our only real excuse for living in this world  
is to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.**

—Sweeting

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**Mark 16:15, 19** And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. . . ." After the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God (Mark 16:15, 19).

**MISSIONS** - "Is it true Dr. Grenfell that you are a missionary?" a woman asked Wilfred Grenfell, a medical missionary to Labrador. Grenfell re-plied, "Is it true, madam, that you are not?" With his question, Grenfell made sure the woman understood God's top assignment.

With "mission impossible" completed, Jesus left this earth, but not before giving an assignment to His agents. He had a job for them to do, but it was no secret mission. He spoke publicly about the task and never called His people private agents.

He told them to clearly report what they had seen and heard to everyone everywhere. This should have been no surprise to His Jewish operatives; God told Israel in the Old Testament to tell the surrounding nations of His mighty acts.

Judas, the double agent, defected early, but over five-hundred agency personnel got Christ's memo about a new mission. Peter, one of His top men, openly carried out his duties. Not fearing political intrigue, he even briefed a soldier named Cornelius about the mission (Acts 10:38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43).

Some have distorted the Director's words with secret codes and clandestine acts, but those who read the original document have no trouble understanding the mission. The only problem is the short supply of agents. Our Daily Bread

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**Inspired Spirituality.** Mark 16:1 And when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the {mother} of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. (NAS)

A real Christian is an odd number, anyway.

They feel supreme love for One whom they have not seen;

They talk familiarly every day to Someone they cannot see;

They expect to go to heaven on the virtue of Another;

Empties themselves in order to be full;

Admits they are wrong so he can be declared right;

Humbles them self in order to be exalted

Strongest when he is weakest;

Richest when he is poorest

Happiest when he feels the worst.

He dies so he can live; forsakes in order to have;

Gives away so he can keep;

Sees the invisible,

Hears the inaudible,

Knows that which passeth knowledge.

A. W. Tozer

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**Sad Or Glad?** : Mark 16:1-14 - They mourned and wept. —Mark 16:10 Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. — John 20:20 The first Resurrection Day began with gloom and despair for the disciples of our Lord. Three days earlier, their Master had been crucified and buried. We can imagine them huddled together behind closed doors as “they mourned and wept” (Mark 16:10). But John told us that before the day ended the disciples “were glad” (John 20:20). From mourning in the morning—to gladness in the evening! What made the difference? Seeing their resurrected Lord made all the difference. It changed mourning into gladness, weeping into joy. There is still a deeper and a greater lesson here. All their mourning and weeping had been unnecessary. Jesus did not sympathize with their heartbreaking sorrow, but instead He “rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart” (Mark 16:14). He had told them repeatedly that He would rise from the dead on the third day (Matthew 20:19; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33). His enemies remembered (Matthew 27:62-66), but His disciples forgot. They were filled with sorrow because they didn’t believe His promise. We too can have great reason to be filled with joyous anticipation and hope as we await the coming of our resurrected Lord. —[M.R. DeHaan, M.D.](#)

Yes, Christ the Lord is risen,  
Has come forth from the grave;  
He breaks the chains of death for you  
And now has power to save. —Woodruff

Christ’s empty tomb fills us with hope.

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**A Personal Gospel** Read: John 3:1-18 | Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. —Mark 16:15

In John 3:16 we read, “For God so loved the world.” But what about His love for individuals? The rest of the verse reveals the central purpose behind God’s sacrifice of His Son: “That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Therefore, without exception, every person may interpret John 3:16 like this: “For God so loved me!”

A. B. Simpson, a great missionary of the past, often hugged a globe to his chest and wept over the world’s lostness. Yet his global vision was marked by compassion for individuals. You and I also must feel the responsibility to take the gospel to our world—by sharing the good news with one person at a time.

Unfortunately, we often think of the Great Commission in terms of “foreign missions” only. “World missions” is perhaps a better term, for that includes our nearest neighbors, who are part of the world to which God has called us. And we are already there!

Like A. B. Simpson, embrace your smaller world through earnest prayer as you consider lost individuals in your family, neighborhood, and workplace. Then, as you seek to live and give the good news, expect God to open doors of opportunity. [Joanie Yoder](#)

Jesus died to bring salvation  
For the rich and for the poor;  
Those of every tribe and nation—  
He includes the ones next door. —Anon.

The light that shines farthest, shines brightest at home.

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**Sunrise Hope** Read: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 | Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. —Mark 16:2

Think of what it would be like if we went to bed some night knowing that the sun would not rise again the next morning. Think of the coldness, the unending darkness, the inescapable fingers of death that would gradually move across the earth. Plants would wither, flowers would wilt, trees would die, and all of life would perish for lack of sunlight.

But praise God, the sun does rise every day. Its warm, life-giving light floods the earth. The “death” of a sunset each day is followed by the “resurrection” of a sunrise the next day—and our hope is renewed. Every morning the rays of the sun remind us that the long night of sin and darkness will give way to eternal day in heaven.

Even more sure than the rising of the morning sun is the certainty of our resurrection in Jesus Christ. The dark night of death came upon Him, and His lifeless body was laid in the tomb. But He arose! And in His resurrection is the promise of our own resurrection to life. The apostle Paul declared, “Even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

The next time you see the sun rise and watch its rays brighten the morning sky, let hope fill your heart. It is a reminder of your own sure resurrection! [David Egner](#)

Rejoice in glorious hope!  
Our Lord the Judge shall come  
And take His servants up  
To their eternal home. —Wesley

Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of our own.

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**Mark 16:14-20** Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16:15

In a cemetery at Yale University is the grave of a remarkable missionary named Hiram Bingham. As a young man, he felt impressed that the "Go" in Mark 16:15 was meant for him, and it resonated like this: "Go to the Sandwich Islands [modern Hawaii] and preach the gospel to every creature there." Arriving there in 1819, Bingham found the inhabitants with no written language. They were hardened gamblers, thieves, and alcoholics who practiced raw immorality and human sacrifice. Children were routinely killed, torture was widespread, and disease was rampant. Bingham studied the language, reduced it to writing, translated the New Testament, established schools, and taught hygiene to the people. After four years, the first native convert was baptized. A revival swept over the islands that resembled the Pentecostal days of Acts. On February 10, 1822, after preaching to huge crowds from Mark 16:15, Bingham wrote, "I discoursed on the great commission given by Christ to His disciples to proclaim His gospel in all the world, as the grand reason of our coming to them and of their attending to the message of His ambassadors." It's the Grand Reason for our lives too.

PS: Hiram's son, Hiram Bingham II, also became a missionary in Hawaii. His grandson, Hiram Bingham III, was an explorer who became a U.S. Senator and the governor of Connecticut. His great-grandson, Hiram Bingham IV, became American vice-consul in Marseille, France, during World War II, and rescued Jews from the Holocaust. ([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

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**Mark 16:15, Luke 16:27,28, Acts 16:9 - Cry From Above and Beneath and Without**

Some years ago, a very good friend of mine, Dr. E. Myers Harrison, gave a missionary message that I cannot forget. It was to a small group of people, but I will never forget the sermon. Dr. Harrison is now at home with the Lord, but he was a great servant of God and a great missionary statesman. He said that each of us as Christians must hear what God has to say. There is the command from above: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature? (Mark 16:15). Have you heard that? I've heard people say, "But God wants our church to be different. We're not supposed to have a missionary program.? I don't believe that. I believe the command from above is given to every Christian and to every assembly that God has raised up.

Then there is the cry from beneath. Remember the rich man who died and woke up in hell and begged for someone to go and tell his brothers? (see Luke 16). "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house (for I have five brethren), that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment? (Lk 16:27,28). There is the cry from beneath. If you and I could hear the cries of people in a lost eternity right now, we'd realize how important it is to get the Gospel out. There's the command from **above**. Have you heard it? There's the cry from **beneath**. Have you heard it?

Then, according to Dr. Harrison, there is the call from **without**. Acts 16:9 says, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us.? People around us are saying, "Please come to help us!" So much money, time and energy is being spent on routine church matters in America when there is a whole world to reach for Christ! We face so many open doors!

[Something Happens When Churches Pray](#), Warren Wiersbe, pp. 102-3 (1984)

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**Mark 16:15 Another Far Country - Go ye into all the world (Mark 16:15).**

Every Christian is a missionary, for all the world is a mission field. Do not think of missionaries as meaning only those witnesses abroad who have returned from Africa or Asia with pictures to show to sleepy church members. If you cannot cross the sea in person you can project yourself by prayer and provision. You can pray laborers into the harvest and you can provide for them while they are in the harvest. The smallest country church may have a worldwide ministry and the lowliest Christian may touch earth's uttermost corner.

1. "After he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go" (Acts 16:10).
2. The vision, the vista, the venture. The "Lo" must be followed by the "Go."
3. Isaiah saw the King. He saw the country, "a people of unclean lips." He heard the call, "Whom shall I send?" He answered it: "Here am I, send me."

The far country of the heavenlies has its counterpart in the far country of the earthlies. The mystery must be made known amidst the misery!

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## **Mark 16:16 - Water Baptism is Not the Result of Salvation but should be our Response to Salvation**

From 1974 to 1978 I was involved in evangelistic outreach ministry at two universities: Arkansas State University (1974-76) and North Carolina State University (1976-778). I often ran into students who believed that in order to go to heaven you had to be baptized. One of the passages they cited was Mark 16:15-16.

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

In this article I will explain why this verse can't be teaching salvation by baptism and then show what it does mean.

### **Mark 16:16 Isn't Teaching That You Must Be Water Baptized to Go to Heaven**

There are a number of clear and compelling reasons why we can be sure that Mark 16:16 isn't teaching that water baptism is a condition of eternal salvation:

The basis of condemnation is unbelief only.

The apostles did not preach that you must be baptized to go to heaven.

The Gospel never changes.

There are NT examples of people who were saved before they were baptized.

Let's briefly consider each of those points in more detail.

#### **Condemnation Is for Unbelief Only**

Jesus didn't say, "He who is not baptized will be condemned." Neither did He say, "He who does not believe and is not baptized will be condemned." By this our Lord made it clear that faith alone was necessary to avoid eternal condemnation. He said the same thing in John 3:18: "He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (see also John 5:24; 6:47).

#### **The Apostles Preached Salvation by Faith Alone**

Two of the disciples in the inner circle were Peter and John. Both of them heard Jesus say the words recorded in Mark 16. Yet both of them taught that the only condition of eternal salvation was trusting in Christ and Him alone.

Peter proclaimed the Gospel to Cornelius and his family. He led them to faith in Christ before he even mentioned baptism (cf. Acts 10:34-44). Only after they were saved and baptized by the Holy Spirit did Peter mention Christian baptism and give them the opportunity to be baptized (Acts 10:45-48).

The apostle John wrote an evangelistic book that we call the Gospel of John. He repeatedly indicated that faith is the condition of eternal salvation. Yet not once in all of John's Gospel, written after the event recorded in Mark 16:16 occurred, did John condition eternal salvation upon water baptism. (In fact, Christian water baptism is not even mentioned in John's Gospel. )

#### **The Gospel Never Changes**

"What about the thief on the cross?" I would say. "Jesus said he would be with Him that day in Paradise, yet he was never baptized."

The response I would get was inevitably this: That was before Pentecost. After Pentecost, you have to be baptized in order to be saved.

What these students were telling me was that the Gospel had changed. Before Jesus' resurrection and the coming of the Spirit a person was saved without water baptism. After that water baptism is required.

That is an impossible position to defend since the apostle Paul clearly indicates that we are saved in this age the same way Abraham and David were saved in their age (cf. Rom. 4:1-8; Gal. 3:6-14). The Gospel has always been, and always will be, by grace through faith plus nothing. We find this in the first book in the Bible (Gen. 3:15; 15:6) and in the last book in the Bible (Rev. 22:17).

#### **The NT Gives Examples of Salvation Before Baptism**

In addition to the thief on the cross, there are other NT examples of people who were saved without being baptized. Martha (John 11:25-27) is one. Another is Cornelius and his household. According to Acts 10:43-48, they were saved the moment they heard Peter tell them that all who believe in the Lord Jesus receive remission of sins. At that very moment, before they were baptized with water, they were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

These four points prove that Mark 16:16 is not teaching that you must be water baptized to go to heaven. However, the question still remains as to what Mark 16:16 does mean.

### **Mark 16:16 Is Teaching That All Who Respond to the Great Commission Will Go to Heaven**

The key to understanding these verses is to recognize that they are a summary statement of the Great Commission. Mark is not reporting everything that Jesus said about the Great Commission. He is recording one summary statement that Jesus made of it.

The Great Commission was communicated by the Lord on five different occasions (once each in the Gospels and Acts). There is a lot of variety in the way the Great Commission is expressed in these five instances. In some of those statements only evangelism is mentioned (e. g. , Luke 24:47, though it could possibly be dealing with both evangelism and discipleship, and Acts 1:8). In some only discipleship is mentioned (Matt. 28:18-20; John 21:15-17). The Great Commission in Mark 16:15-16 includes both evangelism and discipleship. Preaching the Gospel to every creature (v. 15) is evangelism. Baptizing those who believe (v. 16) is the first step in discipleship.

#### **What Jesus is saying in Mark 16:15-16 is this:**

Preach the Gospel to everyone on earth (v. 15).

Tell people to believe in Him and to be baptized (implied in v. 16).

Those who believe and are baptized will be saved.

Those who don't believe will be condemned.

It is, of course, true that all who believe and are baptized will be eternally saved. That is not to say, however, that those who either refuse to be baptized or who fail to be baptized through procrastination, ignorance, or lack of opportunity (for example, some people have died immediately after trusting in Christ) will not be saved. They will. At the very moment they believe, they are saved from the penalty of sin, eternal condemnation.

We must be careful not to read into Scripture. Jesus does not say or even imply that the one who isn't baptized won't be saved. We know that is not true from other Scripture, and even from the second half of v. 16.

#### **Conclusion**

Mark 16:16 does not contradict salvation by faith alone. Rather, it affirms it. Jesus clearly and unmistakably indicates that the sole basis of eternal condemnation is unbelief. The sole basis for eternal salvation is believing the Lord Jesus, and Him alone, for it.

Another understanding of Mark 16:16 is that it refers to Holy Spirit baptism (see, for example, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, Vol. 6, p. 150). Except for some exceptional cases in the Book of Acts, Holy Spirit baptism has always occurred at the point of faith. Compare 1 Cor. 12:13. While that view is possible, I don't believe it fits the context as well as the one I have articulated here. - [Bob Wilkin, The GES News, May-June 1995, pp. 2-4](#)

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### **Mark 16:20**

The Lord working with them. - This was the secret of the successes of the early Church. Theirs was the simple commission to preach; but wherever they did so, the Lord confirmed their word with signs following. In Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch, Rome, and to the uttermost end of the world, wherever these simple men stood up and made their proclamation, their invisible Lord was present, and his Spirit bore witness.

Nothing less than this will account for the marvellous successes of those early preachers. He who sat at the right hand of God in the attitude of majestic rest was always beside them in the intensity of the most untiring work. What was done by them on earth was wrought by Himself. His right hand and his holy arm got Him the victory.

This blessed partnership has never been repealed. Jesus has never withdrawn from the compact; and if we could only dare to count and reckon on Him, we would find that He was co-operating in church, and Sunday-school, and mission-station. There are a few rules to be observed, however, before we can count upon Him thus:—

- (1) We must be clean in heart and life. He cannot identify Himself with those who are consciously delinquent.
- (2) We must not seek our own glory, but God's, and the pure blessing of men.
- (3) We must use the Word of God as our sword, our lever, our balm, our cordial, our charm.

(4) We must be in loving harmony with those who name his name, as He cannot countenance seclusion or uncharitable feeling.

(5) We must by faith claim and reckon upon Him — speaking to Him as to the message before it is delivered, relying on Him during its delivery, and conferring with Him about its effect. Not anxious or elated, but at rest. Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily